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A.П.О.

ALARMS AND EXCURSIONS

A.P.O.

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Photo : Gale & Polden

THE AUTHOR

ALARMS & EXCURSIONS

REMINISCENCES OF A SOLDIER

by

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With a Foreword by

THE RT. HON. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL
P.C., C.H., M.P.

WITH FRONTISPIECE PORTRAIT

ΔΩΡΕΑ

Ι. ΜΗΤΑΣ

April. 2001.3

LONGMANS GREEN AND CO.
LONDON ✧ NEW YORK ✧ TORONTO

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114 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

221 EAST 20TH STREET, CHICAGO

88 TREMONT STREET, BOSTON

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

215 VICTORIA STREET, TORONTO

First published 1938

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

FOREWORD

MY first impression of the author of this attractive story was gained a few days before Spion Kop. In the first light of dawn I saw three or four horsemen swimming back to us across the Tugela River amid a rattle of Mauser fire. A few minutes later Tom Bridges, still dripping, joined us in the dip of ground from which we had watched his adventure. We soldiered together in Dundonald's Brigade during the relief of Ladysmith, and ever since I have preserved a lively friendship and admiration for him.

His tale is told at a cavalry trot. This is only fitting because of the great distances to be covered, and the immense variety of scenes through which we are led. These pages not only contain many episodes of hard fighting in various countries, but afford vivid sidelights upon the United States during the War, and of Austria, the Balkans and South Russia after its close. All will be read with ease and pleasure alike by those who lived through these times, and those who were lucky or unlucky enough to miss them.

There are many moving or exciting incidents, a few examples of which may be picked.

We read about the celebrated toy drum which the author beat in the streets of St. Quentin in the retreat from Mons, and thereby got the remains of two battalions of exhausted British infantry to struggle on their road and thus escape the fierce pursuit. We see the Balfour Mission arriving in the United States after the entry of the Great Republic into the struggle. We see General Bridges returning a

year later with his little band of wounded officers to explain to American critics that the British Empire which had lost a million men in the previous sixteen months, was in fact bearing her share of the common burden. We see the General forced to make speeches to great American audiences, or in conversation with President Wilson, who would talk to him about everything except military matters.

No one can read without a thrill the account of a comparatively junior British officer, Major Strutt, acting under the author's orders, bluffing and bullying the Austrian Chancellor into allowing the Emperor Karl and his wife to leave their country unmolested and without an extorted abdication. The snapshot of this unfortunate sovereign, guiltless of the disaster in which his country was involved, under the protection of a handful of British officers, leaving the capital where his ancestors had reigned for seven hundred years, in the full uniform of a Field Marshal, belongs to history. But for this how easily might a Hapsburg massacre have been added to that of the Romanoffs!

We see the hopeless misery of Denekin and Wrangel's rout on the shores of the Black Sea. We see our author, who was wounded five times in the War, struck down by a high-explosive shell during one of the battles at Passchendaele. This incident, which cost him his leg, is certainly of peculiar interest for me. I was indignant when General Plumer, the Army Commander, refused to allow me as Minister of Munitions to be with Bridges on that day; but when I learned what had happened to him, I was by no means sure that I had much ground for complaint.

It was a satisfaction to me, as Secretary of State for the Colonies and Dominions, to be able to commend his

exploits and experience to Australian Ministers for the Governorship of New South Wales. The story of the toy drum was compulsive upon their opinion; but as anyone can see from reading this book, His Majesty's representative had—as was proved—all the qualities and personality, all the comprehension and knowledge of men and affairs necessary for the discharge of so important a task.

Afterwards we both tried to amuse ourselves by painting pictures, and now he has joined me in writing books. Here then in this gay story of grim events, told with modesty and yet with feeling, a wide public may find both pleasure and instruction.

WINSTON S. CHURCHILL.

31st January, 1938.

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CHAPTER I

EARLY DAYS—INDIA—NYASALAND—NATAL

Like camp-fire smoke at eve sweet dreams arise
Of far-off halcyon days when we were young,
And memory's pictures float before our eyes,
We hear again old songs that we have sung :
But through the dusk a summons bids us ' Come ' ;
Hark to the rhythmic throbbing of the Drum !

CHAPTER I

IMAGINE the white efficiency of an operating-theatre, the surgeon ruthless and rubber-gloved with his satellites in their ghostly Ku-Klux-Klan disguise. A harsh light reflects polished instruments and illumines the centre of interest, yourself, taking a last glimpse at the melancholy inverted face of the anæsthetist, final link with the conscious world, as he turns on his magic and projects you into Nirvana.

Such was my fate a short while ago. But as scents have a power of recall denied to all the other senses, so at the first wave of ether the white walls seemed to dissolve and the scene changed. I was back in Flanders, in the battered little house in Wulveringham and beside my bed under the dim oil-lamp stood an orderly in khaki:

"You'll be all right, soon, sir," he said cordially. "You're going into the pictures now."

Outside frequent explosions reminded us that Fritz was still cross over a nasty prod in the vitals that we had given him. The "noises off" were easily identified. That crash was a 5.9 and those distant salvoes would be 11-inch searching for the ammunition dump—only big stuff or air bombs could reach us here. South of the village a pair of our long sixes barked, making the battered old house shake. The window-panes had long since gone and been replaced by paper. Phit! phit! Surely those thuds were gas shells? Gas! Ought one to warn them? No! Let them be gassed and besides everyone had a mask except me and I was soon to have some nice gas of my own.

A sister came in and peered gravely at me. I wondered if I looked as bad as I felt. She leant over me. Was this indeed to be the last woman I should see on earth? She should have been young, lovely and romantic but alas! in the dim light she had a face rather like a horse. What business had she here anyway, so near the front?

"Is there anything you would like done?" she asked, "just in case . . . ?"

"Things don't go all right?" I suggested.

"Yes." Tactless female! She expected me to say, "Give this ring to my mother." Instead I beckoned her to come closer.

"What do you do with all the legs you cut off?"

She looked shocked but said, "Burn them."

"Well," I said, "don't burn mine. Give it to the lion mascot of the 19th Division. He hasn't had meat to-day and he'll know what to do with it. This is my last will and testament and if you don't I shall come back and haunt you!"

And so to the "pictures" in an E.P. tent. "Oh Lord!" I thought as I passed out, "if I come out of this jam alive I shall write about it all some day." And that was just twenty years ago to a month.

So I take up the pen to-day, none too willingly perhaps, but in the pious hope that as the work progresses it may become more congenial, for there must be some kind of fascination, perhaps satisfaction, in the marshalling of facts in their proper order and observing the web and pattern of life that emerges.

My family was, I suppose, a typical English family of the nineteenth century. We were "Men of Kent" and hailed from St. Nicholas-at-Wade, Isle of Thanet, where Bridges have been buried since the sixteenth century. There were nine of us and in those spacious and fruitful

days we were used to seeing large families all round us. My father himself was one of five brothers (one of them was the late Poet Laureate) and four sisters.

My grandmother was one of the nine children of Sir Robert Affleck, 4th Baronet of Dalham. The Afflecks were a distinguished and prolific family and served their country in many capacities. The most notable, Edmund, himself one I believe of nine sons, fought in the "Battle of the Saints," Rodney's victory off Dominica in 1772. which ruined French naval prestige and saved Jamaica. Following Rodney's example, Affleck in the *Bedford* (74 guns) crashed through the French line at the head of Hood's division marking the first departure from the indecisive line-ahead traditions of naval warfare and laying the foundation of that fierce and headlong style of sea fighting which made England the unchallenged mistress of the seas. He was created a baronet for his services and promoted Admiral of the Blue. A younger brother, Philip, became Admiral of the White.

All but one of my grandmother's children were born at Walmer where they lived for many years. They were on terms of friendship with the Iron Duke, then Warden of the Cinque Ports. My mother's father was a German, by name Philippi, son of the hereditary standard-bearer of the Duke of Usingen-Nassau. He remembered Napoleon's army marching to Russia and the French Grenadiers billeted in their house who had a white dog called Cartouche. The same troops came through Usingen again in the great retreat from Moscow in 1812 and Cartouche was still marching with them as one of the survivors. He would tell us how the whole household of some thirty people would eat together, the servants sitting below the salt. His mother spun flax and the servants

hemp and they made their own clothes and candles. He was naturalized British about 1830.

My father joined the East India Company's service at the age of seventeen and arrived at Calcutta during the Mutiny, being posted to the Bengal Artillery, in which he saw active service against the Waziris on the North-west Frontier in 1859-60. He was the inventor of a clinometer for coast batteries and author of a much-used scientific manual called *Bridges' Gunner's Pocket Book*. He came home to get married and returned to India in '62, his eldest son being born at Meerut. My own early recollections are of a large tribe of children following the drum from one station to another. My father eventually died as a Major in the Garrison Artillery in Bermuda, and is buried there.

Bermuda of those days was no fashionable resort and it was not an easy place for a large family to get away from. Passages were eventually found for the three boys in the homeward-bound training-frigate *Atalanta*. But my mother's instinct was to keep all her children together, and in this she was justified by the fact that the *Atalanta* never came to port, being lost in the Atlantic with all hands, leaving no clue behind as not infrequently happened in those pre-Marconi days. Curiously enough a similar fate had overtaken her sister ship, the *Eurydice*, a short time previously. Many years later Bridges, the Poet Laureate, published the famous poem in sprung rhythm on the "Wreck of the *Eurydice*" entrusted to him by his friend Gerald Manley Hopkins, which marks the coming of much modern poetry:

A beetling baldbright cloud through England
Riding: there did storms not mingle? and
Hailropes hustle and grind their
Heavengravel? wolfsnow, worlds of it, wind there?

Left with a full quiver and a small income my mother came home and settled in Falmouth, to educate us as best she could. My eldest brother was delicate and went into the Church, occupying himself much with mission work amongst seamen. He died at the age of forty, Rector of Sutton Mandeville. My youngest brother died in childhood. My second brother, Edward, and myself, went to school at Newton College, whence Edward passed into Sandhurst as a Queen's India Cadet whilst I went to a crammer's, Pritchard at Wargrave, and to Woolwich a year later, in 1890, getting my commission in the Artillery in 1892. The Royal Military Academy in those days was a roughish place and a tight hand was kept on the cadets. I remember the outdoor run to the cold bath in winter and the massed free-fights in the gym. termed "roshes," as relics of barbarism. Having been by no means a show cadet and with no satisfactory reports, except from the riding-school, I was kept at the "shop" an extra six months and finally gazetted to the "Gambadiers" at Delhi. This was entirely contrary to my inclinations, for my interest and ambitions were centred rather in the horse than the cannon. But I soon found that the dismounted branches of the Army held compensations. Was it not Roddy Owen, that great horseman and race-rider, who preferred the infantry to the cavalry as opportunities for leave were so much greater?

At that time Delhi was garrisoned by a battery in the red fort of Shah Jehan, and a Sikh regiment outside in cantonments, and two companies of white infantry. Our armament was archaic, old smooth bore 64-pounders looking through open embrasures and we actually did our occasional practices with round-shot down the Jumna Valley, where natives could be seen after every round

chasing the rolling projectile, for iron to them was a scarce commodity. We were an old-fashioned battery run by the non-commissioned officers, and it was a misdemeanour for an officer to visit barracks without an invitation. The men were mostly Irish and having not much else to do drank like fish. This added to hot weather and a heavy meat diet, produced periodical madness especially on Saturday nights when they would break out of barracks and try and loot the Chandni Chauk, the richest bazaar in India.

Once morning parade and orderly room were over, by noon and often long before, one was free and had the whole "live-long Indian day" on one's hands. A desultory hour with the *Moonshi* perhaps, toying with the Urdu language and the consumption of tiffin still left five or six hours of daylight to be filled in. Early crossed in love and of the age to certify myself a confirmed misogynist, the fair sex as represented at the Club did not attract, and I devoted the rest of my waking hours to legitimate sport. And if soldiering was stagnant, this other important side of military life was at its best. Black-buck, partridge and sand-grouse could be found within easy reach of cantonments, while the jheels swarmed with duck and snipe. The Jumna Kadir too at our door abounded with pig waiting to be ridden, and once initiated into that King of Sports, I knew few dull moments, for there is nothing in all the realms of the chase that surpasses the thrill of riding and spearing a fast-fighting boar. Horses were cheap, beaters unlimited, and many of the local gentry subscribed to the Tent Club with little leisure and sometimes little inclination to take active part. It was quite a business to get a field together except during the Christmas camps, but the pig were always there and could be pursued

alone or *à deux*. I have often looked back at the end of a good sporting day, it may be after a lion or tiger, or a fine grouse drive, or forty minutes of the best with a southerly wind and a cloudy sky and all the traditional joys of English fox-hunting, and still the grey boar to my thinking leads the field.

There were still people about at Delhi who had been through the Mutiny of 1857, and as a child of John Company I felt quite at home. Bullets from the Sepoys' muskets were still sticking in the walls of Skinner's Church where I sometimes read the lessons on Sunday. Skinner was a romantic figure of Old India, an Eurasian with a Rajput mother, himself married to a Mohammedan woman. He raised a regiment of horse, and to fulfil a vow built this church (St. James), a mosque, and a Hindu temple all close together. It was these same cartridges that had brought the disaffection in the native army to a head. They had to be bitten before use and were liberally smeared with grease, the fat it was alleged of pigs and cows, anathema respectively to the Mohammedans and Hindu sepoys. This was held to be part of a comprehensive plot to render them pariahs and so easier converts to the Christian faith.

Delhi was redolent of brave deeds. The ancient Mogul capital had been captured by the mutineers and had to be besieged and retaken. The Magazine, the Ridge, Ludlow Castle and the Kashmir Gate were still household words in my day. Here, leading the assault fell John Nicholson, a god amongst Indians and it was at Delhi that Hodson finally took the surrender of Timur. After weeks of anxiety and hard fighting the rebellion was quelled with the aid of our faithful and gallant friends the Sikhs and the Ghurkas. The Mutiny sealed the fate of John Company

after an innings of two and a half centuries, and its forces were transferred to the Crown, and my father with them.

Cholera marred my first hot weather in India, and the men got panicky. Besides deaths from cholera there were several suicides, so we took the whole battery into camp beyond the Ridge. We were very short of officers and at times I found myself (with one year's service) in temporary command. My antidote for all ills of the flesh or spirit was sport, and having managed to borrow some shot-guns I sent the men out in batches to shoot. Their bags were very mixed; all unclassified birds were "snipes," and I remember a kind of heron which was dignified by the title of Snipe Royal. Sometimes they peppered a Hindu husbandman, but in those days a few rupees would heal all wounds. Camp had to be moved every time there was a fresh case, but the epidemic wore itself out in time and we were ordered back to our Fort.

The Battery Sergeant-major, who was that detestable type of soldier-lawyer, underwent his second court-martial the same year. I was present for instruction. He raised objections to each officer of the court except myself. "I could not object," he said, "to 2nd Lieutenant Tom Bridges. Why I knew your father, sir, when you was a little lad so high!" The court had to be reconstituted. He defended himself in a two-hour speech, which began, "In the days of the Cæsars," and gave a résumé of military history up to such time as he, William O'Sullivan, had suffered a raw deal at the hands of his Commanding-Officer. The weather was sweltering and everyone was glad to see him convicted and reduced to the ranks. We were an unlucky battery. My fellow-subaltern (I had only one) died of typhoid, the hard-drinking Major shot

himself, and the Captain jumped off the wall of the fort at Agra.

The following year I was transferred to the Field Artillery at Kamptee. Here I found myself in a smart battery with a very keen lot of officers, and soldiering became much more alive. Again a wealth of sport, for in the Central Provinces even the impoverished subaltern could get his tiger, buffalo and bison within reasonable distance of cantonments without getting too deeply into the hands of the *shroff*.¹ The old Nagpur Hunt provided us with fine pig-sticking and though the pig were not so numerous as at Delhi and Meerut they made up for it in size and ferocity, and the going, much of which was "black cotton" or ledges of sheet rock studded with thorn-bushes was often terribly rough and difficult. If the country was too thick for a horse we would go in shoulder to shoulder and tackle the boar on foot. This meant a rough house, and he who could kill a pig with the Nagpur Hunt could hold his own in most places.

After a couple of happy years, interrupted by six months' leave to England to get over a poisoned leg, the result of a difference of opinion with a sloth bear in a teak forest, I was appointed to a Horse Artillery battery at Khirkee, the artillery suburb of Poona. Though a much larger station than my former ones, and though I was delighted to be "the Right of the Line and the Pride of the Army," this did not suit my tastes so well as the up-country garrisons. Shooting and pig-sticking were difficult to get and one had to be content with polo and racing, both of which ran into money. However, play polo I did and learnt to drive a four-in-hand and made my command of two guns, fifty-five men and seventy-two horses, the

¹ Money-lender.

best section in the best battery of the Service (or so I thought).

In 1897 we moved to Secunderabad where the garrison was commanded by General Charles Tucker, endeared to the Army by his kindly good sense and wonderful flow of barrack-room language. Nothing of note to report in my diary except more civilization, more gymkhanas, more tea-parties, more poodle-faking, less legitimate sport and a greater difficulty about getting leave for the same. The Nizam of Hyderabad did not invite subalterns to shoot his tigers and though I once poached a brace it was risky work and legitimate hunting-grounds were out of reach except for an organized and prolonged expedition. But my Commanding Officer was one who liked to see all our happy faces gathered round him. He did not realize that a small command in apple-pie order could with advantage be left in charge of a smart sergeant or that as Kipling says, "the backbone of the Army is the non-commissioned man." Young officers too are all the better for plenty of leave spent in bona-fide sport. A crisis came when I had to refuse an opportunity of seeing a campaign on the North-west Frontier as orderly officer to a general. This brought home the remoteness of any chance of active service in the Horse Artillery, and eventually decided me to seek fresh fields and become a soldier of fortune, or in the less elegant phraseology of the Army to go scallywagging. So when one day applications were invited for the Uganda Rifles I submitted my name, to the pained astonishment of the above-mentioned officer, to whom the possession of the coveted "jacket" was the be-all and end-all of military existence.

After a couple of months' leave in England I was dispatched not to Uganda but to a new formation, "the

Armed Forces of Central Africa," headquarters at Zomba in Nyasaland. It was all one to me, and in 1898 I took ship for the Cape, finding on board Colonel Plumer¹ with half a dozen officers going out to organize irregulars in North Rhodesia on the chance of a break with Boers. Baden-Powell had already preceded him with similar intent. Their task was to keep the Boers amused and to prevent too many of them coming south until our main forces could be concentrated. I disembarked at Beira and proceeded to shoot my leisurely way up the Pungwe and the Zambesi with Tom Greenfield (afterwards in the Irish Guards) eventually arriving at Zomba while T.G. went across to Mafeking, where he was later besieged.

I was greatly impressed with my company of Yaos from the Nyasa Highlands. Brave and hardy, intelligent and gay, they could march twenty-five miles in a day and build houses for their officers at the end of it. They loved soldiering and would drill each other in their spare time. Their manual exercise would have made the Guards look to their laurels. They were ideal light infantry, as indeed they have since proved themselves in many a hard campaign for they were the nucleus of the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the King's African Rifles.

Meanwhile ever since the Jameson Raid the war clouds had been gathering over the Transvaal, and in November 1899 the storm burst. Exasperated by grievances, real and imaginary, the Boers tried to execute a long-concerted scheme for the elimination of the British from the Cape to the Zambezi. I had already endeavoured to secure my release from the Foreign Office in this eventuality, but without success. Nor was my local chief, Colonel W.

¹ The late Field-Marshal.

Manning,¹ any more accommodating. Determined, however, not to miss this campaign I burnt my boats and set out from Zomba for the Zambezi the day after we heard war had been declared, taking nothing with me but a sporting Mannlicher, a revolver, khaki kit and some French leave. I could carry my whole outfit myself if need be.

My travelling companion, a brother officer, had been given leave to join his regiment in Natal. I envied him. But he never reached his destination. Already malaria-ridden he had to abandon the journey and eventually succumbed to blackwater fever. Coming down the Zambezi from Tete in a stern-wheeler we grounded and stuck tight for most of the day on the edge of the Elephant Marsh, a Portuguese game reserve on the right bank. Here I fumed and fretted, feverish with anxiety lest I should miss the war (which had then been going on for a week and which lasted for three years). Late in the evening we spotted a big elephant washing himself on the river-bank and judged him to be on the outside edge of the reserve. We gave ourselves the benefit of the doubt, and accompanied by the Portuguese captain with a dreadful old blunderbuss, I took the .250 Mannlicher and went ashore after him. The reeds were very high and we kept losing sight of our quarry, but eventually secured him after a shameful expenditure of ammunition. The only thing to be said in our favour was that we gave the elephant every opportunity to escape. He was a very old bull with one tusk and was apparently suffering from some complaint which impaired his mobility.

Chindé, the little port at the mouth of the river, provided a mild thrill. I was sitting in the rest-house

¹ The late Sir W. Manning, Governor of Ceylon.

while a Kaffir expertly removed some "jiggers" that were encamped under my toe-nails, when the consul came in and showed me a telegram bidding him inform one Lieutenant Bridges if he should pass that way that he was to return immediately and report himself at Zomba. But I was travelling incognito and could be of no assistance to him. A two-days' wait and at last a miserable little tug took me by a rough passage to Durban, where I jumped into the first train going north and found myself with oxen and mules for company. I made friends with the Afrikaner transport-rider in charge of the oxen who gave me the war bulletin up to date.

There had been a battle at Elandslaagte where a newly raised regiment of Uitlanders, the Imperial Light Horse, had lost their Colonel, Scott-Chisholm, and had distinguished themselves by capturing the Boer position shoulder to shoulder with the Gordon Highlanders—"and nary a baynit amongst them." (The irregulars did not carry this weapon.) The attack was led by Ian Hamilton, and was a fine feat of arms for which several Victoria Crosses were afterwards awarded to the two regiments. Had he not been a General, Ian Hamilton would have received one of them. Another fight at Talana Hill, where General Penn-Symons and most of his staff were killed, had resulted in the investment of Ladysmith. My friend ascribed our reverse to the marksmanship of the Boers and the folly of our own staff officers "peacocking round" with red pugarees on their helmets.

When the train stopped at Pietermaritzburg I got out and spoke to the Railway Staff Officer, who told me that there were some twenty officers there waiting to get up to Ladysmith or to get jobs at Estcourt, which was now railhead. Being in khaki breeches and a "grey-back," I was

able to maintain my incognito and rejoined my oxen, arriving at Estcourt early next morning. Here I slipped on my khaki jacket, Sam Browne belt and helmet and became the complete officer. A hearty ham-and-egg breakfast in the railway refreshment-room was interrupted by the sound of gunfire and basely bribing a Kaffir boy who was holding someone's useful-looking Basuto pony outside the little tin station, I rode for the centre of interest, which appeared to be a little eminence a mile or so outside the town. Here I found guns in action, Charles Long, a Horse Artillery Colonel, in command, busy repelling a Boer reconnoitring party. A few well-directed shells soon scattered the invaders, leaving, we hoped, their curiosity unsatisfied, for the garrison was quite inadequate. It consisted of two battalions, 300 volunteers, with a battery of nine-pounders (muzzle-loaders!) and a squadron of the Imperial Light Horse, in all about 2,000 men. As often happens, the plethora of officers at Maritzburg was in direct contrast to the paucity at the front, and after damning my eyes and telling me to go back to Central Africa, Long adopted me as a galloper, and on return to his headquarters I found plenty to do helping his over-worked staff.

It now became clear that the Boers, having bottled Sir George White up in Ladysmith, were bent on invading Natal, and there was only our little force to stop them. I think it was two days later that Colonel Long said, "I hate that — armoured train of ours; this is the last time I let it go puffing up to Colenso." By lunch-time we got a message that the train (popularly known as "Wilson's death-trap") had been derailed in a cutting and heavily attacked on both sides of the line. Winston Churchill, then a war correspondent, distinguished himself by

helping to get the engine clear and putting the wounded on it before returning to the cutting to see the fight and be captured with the company of Dublin Fusiliers that formed the train's complement. But "stone walls do not a prison make," and the irrepressible Winston contrived a dramatic escape from Pretoria and was back in the firing-line within a month.

After I had been out for a day with the Imperial Light Horse the squadron leader, Bottomley, applied for me to command a troop that fell vacant through a casualty. Colonel Long agreed, and I jumped at the idea, seeing a way of sinking my identity at any rate for a time.

The Imperial Light Horse was the first raised of the irregular regiments of the Boer War, and made a great name for itself. Its birth was due to private enterprise. Prominent men on the Rand, such as Percy Fitzpatrick, the author of *Jock of the Bushveld*, Lionel Phillips and their friends, combined to finance the mounting and equipping of a thousand men. Five thousand presented themselves for enrolment. Composed for the most part of the Transvaal "Uitlanders" with a real red-hot grievance against the Boers, it was filled up with tough frontiersmen, hunters, gold-seekers and colonial boys, all excellent fighting material. They were over establishment soon after recruiting was opened and men frequently offered to join without pay. There was a small leaven of Imperial Officers. After Elandslaagte Edwards (5th Dragoon Guards), succeeded to the command of the regiment, Fitzgerald (11th Hussars) becoming Adjutant in place of Reggie Barnes (4th Hussars), who had been wounded. Later in the war Wools-Sampson took over command, but though a fervent patriot with a wide knowledge of the Boers and their tactics he could not hold the regiment

together, and Briggs¹ (from the Bays) was eventually brought in to command. There were many other irregular regiments raised, but the Imperial Light Horse had the pick of men and officers, and remained unsurpassed amongst them right up to the end of the war. As long as I served with them the 1st Imperial Light Horse had the unique record of never losing a prisoner, a fine achievement as they were continuously in the forefront of the battle and had many casualties. The regiment was now in Ladysmith, only "A" Squadron having been left at Colenso to try and keep communication open.

The Boers, who must have numbered about 40,000 mounted riflemen at the beginning of the war, realized that their only hope of victory lay in striking a decisive blow before the British could set their ponderous and remote war machine in motion. This they certainly tried hard to do but their good intentions were frustrated by their lack of discipline and faulty ammunition and supply service. They were thus unable to keep their men in the field and their forces dwindled rapidly to some 20,000 die-hards.

My first real baptism of fire occurred at Willow Grange, where we attacked one of the two Boer columns under Joubert, which were trekking south into Natal with the laudable idea of occupying Pietermaritzburg and cutting us all off from the sea. The fight on our part was a mere demonstration and our squadron's task was to cover the withdrawal of the West Yorks which had got into a nasty position and were in danger of succumbing to the usual encircling tactics of the Boers, who never failed to make full use of their mobility. We advanced up a ridge on foot and took over the position from the infantry. It was

¹ General Sir Charles Briggs.

not a nice spot as Boer riflemen had crept round on adjoining spurs and were enfilading a low stone wall which supplied the only cover. In a crowded hour I learnt how to distinguish between the plick-plock of long-range fire and the whip crack of point blank, and the difference in sound of a rifle shot aimed at oneself or at someone else. Useful lessons for a scout, quickly learnt and never forgotten. I think we gave as good as we got and were able to evacuate most of the infantry wounded before we came away. The Mounted Infantry came into action in turn to cover our withdrawal and "Mary" Price-Davis, of the Rifle Brigade, got a well-earned V.C. for helping a dismounted rifleman. I was pleased with the behaviour of my troop, every man of which seemed worth his salt. Amongst others, it included two tough Australian adventurers, two brothers who were professional hunters in South Africa, three or four scouts who had seen service in the Kaffir wars, a young man from Eton who joined with two horses of his own, also George, the brother of Percy Fitzpatrick, who was killed in this encounter.

Fortunately the Boers either lost their appetite to conquer Natal, or they were withdrawn for strategic reasons. Anyhow, they turned north again and headed back for Ladysmith.

General Buller's arrival and big reinforcements put our force on to a more solid footing. But Buller was no feverish hustler and it was six weeks before he was ready to make his frontal attack at Colenso for which the Boers were by that time thoroughly prepared. Our losses were heavy. Our own small part in the battle was to make a demonstration which meant lying out in an open field for an hour under well-aimed rifle-fire. Any man who raised himself to fire a shot was picked off. We had a lot of

casualties and did no good. I made up my mind, orders or no orders, never to let my men be put in such a foolish position again.

After Colenso the squadron was made into a composite regiment with a squadron of Natal Carabiniers and a company of Mounted Infantry, details of whose formations were in Ladysmith (the 60th and Rifle Brigade and Dublin Fusiliers). Command was given to Hubert Gough, then a Captain in the 16th Lancers on Buller's staff. Our first engagement as a regiment, though small, was, thanks to a local man, Duncan McKenzie¹ of the Natal Carabiniers, very successful in cutting off and severely handling a Boer commando which was working round our left flank at Acton Homes. It was a fine example of what could be done by intimate knowledge of the ground and good stalking, and ended after a fast three-mile gallop in a perfect ambushade, the Boers riding through a narrow neck held by us on either side. It was here that I think I saved a brother-officer's life. He was shot through the lung and I refused to allow the doctor to evacuate him. It would have meant carrying him over stony kopjes and a long bumpy drive in an Indian tonga. I made him a little bivouac on the hill where he stayed with a white orderly and a Kaffir boy, and when he did move his wound had sealed itself and he eventually recovered.

Shortly after Colenso my incognito was unmasked. Lord Dundonald who commanded the irregular cavalry sent for me and said that the War Office were very annoyed and had issued orders that I was to be put under arrest and sent home for trial for absence without leave. A serious affair, he said, but that he had been to General Buller and represented that I commanded a useful body

¹ Afterwards Major-General Sir D. McKenzie.

of scouts and could ill be spared. To this the Commander-in-Chief eventually agreed and the War Office allowed the case to stand over until after the war.

General Buller continued his deliberate attempts to cross the Tugela but the Boers used their interior lines and mobility to good purpose and held him up everywhere. At Vaalkrantz, after a night march by the cavalry to the river, no one could be found who knew the drift (ford), and I was sent for and ordered to swim across with a patrol of four men. We got over all right, but scouting up the opposite slopes were fired at from a farm wall at close quarters and had a horse shot and I discovered that my own horse (a newly acquired chestnut Basuto) though a good swimmer would not stand fire and had "a mouth like a bell and a heart of hell." He bolted back for the river and I never rode him again.

General Sir Francis Clery was entrusted with this operation, owing it was said to the masterly chapter on crossing rivers in the face of opposition given in his *Minor Tactics*. We certainly did seize the high ground across the river, including the ill-famed Spion Kop, the key to Ladysmith, but let the Boers take it away from us. Here they pursued their Majuba tactics of stalking uphill with great success. The issue of battle hung in suspense on this hill for two or three days until both sides thought themselves beaten and gave orders for retirement. Unfortunately our retirement was prompter than that of the enemy.

The position was vital to us and its successful retention would have at once raised the siege. Important as it was, however, neither General Clery nor Sir Charles Warren ever went up the hill to see the situation for themselves. In the resultant confusion the position was abandoned by

subordinates who did not appreciate its strategic value. This failure of the higher command to reconnoitre cost us two months of valuable time and for those in Ladysmith entailed much suffering and many casualties. They might have remembered that Wellington once said, "The real reason why I succeeded is because I was always on the spot. I saw everything and did everything for myself." One may be certain that that long nose (worth a division) would have poked itself over the edge of the Spion Kop plateau.

While this struggle was in progress I was sent to try and work round the rear of the Boers and find out what was going on. I left camp at dark with a patrol and made for a well-marked conical hill outside our left flank. Here we left our horses and I took with me one man, a red-headed colonial lad named Stanley London, who knew the ground, could speak Kaffir and the Taal and could hold his own in a scrap.

Travelling as light as possible and armed only with revolvers, we walked most of the night and found our way to a pass in the Drakensberg called Van Reenans, where we concealed ourselves and waited for daybreak. As soon as it got light we were able to see several laagers behind Spion Kop and also one below us, and the route we had taken during the night which was now well marked by a ribbon of track across the dewy grass. To our left was the road through the rocky pass, the line of communications for the Free State commandos engaged at Ladysmith. The laager below us was already being struck and moving to the north, and during the day we could see horsemen and wagons from behind Spion Kop following suit. This was important news, but there was no hope of getting it back till dark as Boers were everywhere,

and even if we had succeeded in crossing the open valley in daylight we were some twenty miles from camp and the horses were not to meet us until 10 p.m. that night. So we camouflaged our hide and ate our emergency rations while I made a sketch and took notes.

About nine in the morning we saw two Boers riding towards us, following our tracks. Arrived at the foot of the hill they held a consultation. Then one dismounted and proceeded to follow our spoor on foot, whilst the other remained with the two horses. This required action, and London suggested that he should move round and ambush the stalker and either capture or shoot him. So he disappeared and I went on with my observations. A quarter of an hour later I heard his whistle and on my answering it he appeared with a Mauser slung on his shoulder preceded by a middle-aged nervous-looking Boer dressed in moleskins. London had hidden near our tracks and as soon as the Boer passed had held him up from behind. All day our prisoner stayed and we became quite matey and swapped information and rations. He had no stomach for the war and would not be sorry to go to a prison camp. He looked on Ladysmith as already relieved and pointed out to me the long wagon columns moving north. But still Boer shells were bursting accurately on Spion Kop and there was evidence of a stubborn struggle there. After an hour or so our prisoner's companion got tired of waiting and shouting down below and rode off, taking both horses with him.

We could see the conical hill where the patrol was to meet us, and our prisoner volunteered to take us there by a shorter route as soon as it got dark enough to move. At sundown we moved off, negotiating the rough hillside

before dark, then walked across the open veldt in single file, the Boer between us, myself leading and London, pistol in hand, behind. Our captive was as good as his word and we arrived at the rendezvous two hours before the horses. London and I agreed to keep half-hour watch and ward on our prisoner, but having been awake for over twenty-four hours in the very first watch I went off sound asleep and was only roused by the arrival of the patrol with our horses. But the Boer had gone, though London still had his rifle slung on his shoulder. It was lucky for us that he was not a tougher customer.

We hurried on to camp and I sent in my report, but the abandonment of Spion Kop had already been decided on. It had been ordered at 7.30 in the evening and General Buller only knew of it next morning. The retirement was ordered by Colonel Thornycroft, who had been put in command of the troops on the hill and had the reputation of being a stout fighter. But he was wounded and doubtless did not realize the far-reaching effects of his decision. The responsibility must lie with his seniors who were not in close enough touch with the situation. Though our troops had endured a severe grueling all day especially from well-directed shrapnel and pom-pom fire, when darkness set in reorganization and relief were possible in comparative safety. It was galling to learn that the Boers had also abandoned the position, leaving only a few die-hards on the hill. It was one of those drawn battles where he who has the guts to remain on the ground wins. Had we had the Robert E. Lee of Antietam who refused to quit his position in spite of the reports and advice of all his generals, even the redoubtable Stonewall Jackson, and who thereby turned a drawn battle into a victory, we would have raised the siege of

Ladysmith which now lasted for another month, putting a great strain on the garrison.

Having acknowledged defeat and evacuated the battlefield, we recrossed the Tugela and made our way round to the right flank to try again. Yet still the army had confidence in "the Ferryman," as Sir Redvers Buller was nicknamed, although I believe he had suggested surrender to Sir George White. He was popular, he fed his men well and gave them plenty of rest. I only met him once when sent for to carry dispatches through the Boer lines into Ladysmith. This was considered necessary owing to the unsatisfactory state of communication, the helio (much interrupted by cloud) by day and searchlight on the clouds at night. I had a good local man with me and was confident of success. I dined with the General, who was genial and chatty and chaffed me about my escapade from Central Africa, and gave me the first really good meal I had had during the campaign. I slept under the headquarters ox-wagon until required, but the idea seems to have been abandoned, and in the morning I returned to my troop who had never expected to see me again.

It was not until the end of February that we broke through to Ladysmith by way of Cingolo Hill, and finally entered the beleaguered town. I remember the sight well as I rode in at the head of the "Irregulars" a day ahead of the Army across the muddy Klip River. Men were gathered on the steep banks, emaciated with starvation and dysentery and raised only a feeble cheer as we splashed and clattered by. I thought of Sir Harry Smith, that doughty rifleman who named the town after his brave Spanish consort, Juana Maria de Los Dolores de Leon, whom he had rescued at the Sack of Badajoz, and hoped

he would be apprised of yet another episode redounding to the stubborn courage of the British soldiers of whom he was so proud.

Here is an extract from a letter to my sister, Maud, nursing in the Base Hospital at Pietermaritzburg:

Ladysmith! At last.

As you will have seen long before you get this, here we are at last. There has been such a lot of fighting that I can't describe it, but our infantry fairly got into the Boers at the crossing and got back a bit of their own with the bayonet. The next day my squadron led the army and my troop being in advance we did all the scouting. We got into about 150 Boers and drove them out of their position and then with our squadron and one of Natal Carbiniers, all under Major Gough, 16th L., we made a dash for Ladysmith getting in safely about 5 p.m. The populace were wild! General White made us parade through the town and even the wretched Boer prisoners in the jail cheered. No one in the relief column knew we were in till they got it signalled by lamp that night. Next morning I went with eight men and swam the Klip and got on to Bulwan and found all the Boers had gone. . . . There are lots of sick and wounded in Ladysmith, over 2,000 I believe, and they are all (the unsick) very weak and the horses useless. They have been on $1\frac{1}{2}$ biscuits and half a pound of horse for some time. I had some horse with them, it wasn't bad, makes you feel inclined to whinny.

Then follows some trenchant if immature criticism of the Generalship of the Relief Force.

Sir George White had held out well and saved Natal. His losses were heavy, 600 graves in the cemetery and one-fifth of his force in hospital sick and wounded. The outstanding episodes of the siege were the destruction of

"Long Tom," the six-inch Creusot gun, which was a sharp thorn in the side of the defence (although it did shoot plum puddings into the town on Christmas Day) as well as a 4.7 howitzer, by a sortie of the Imperial Light Horse and Natal Carabiniers led by Archie Hunter,¹ a paladin of the Egyptian Army, and the defence of Wagon Hill against a determined attempt to capture the city. Here the Imperial Light Horse had greatly distinguished themselves and their regimental monument stands on the hill. Another brilliant sortie by the Rifle Brigade destroyed a second 4.7 but owing to delay in the demolition the enemy managed to get across their line of retreat and inflict heavy loss. Naval 4.7's under Hedworth Lambton were thrown into Ladysmith at the last moment and added some punch to its field artillery.

Most of the horses and mules had been eaten during the siege (as well as their oats). Orders had been given to keep those in best condition which had the curious result of leaving us with a lot of greys. In fact among some seventy horses, the survivors of the regiment that I took over there must have been fifty greys. One notable exception who survived the siege deserves mention. He was the "Old Soldier," a bay "waler" I had bought in India when cast for age from the Horse Artillery three years previously. He was a well-known character in the fighting ring of Military Tournaments and also after pig and helpful in breaking young horses in to coach work. He was an old-fashioned horse of much intelligence and a great heart. I found him a kind home on leaving India and was surprised to see him, thin as a rail, quietly nibbling the bark of a gum-tree in the gunner lines of Ladysmith. His master was in hospital where I visited

¹ The late General Sir Archibald Hunter.

him and soon regained possession. A month knee-deep in the luscious pastures of the Mooi River where we convalesced the survivors, put him back in fine fettle and it was grand to see the old veteran kicking up his heels in the paddock, for he was always chock-full of mischief. His adventurous life ended at the Relief of Mafeking where he was shot dead with my groom on his back. I trust he roams the Fields of Asphodel and perchance rubs noses and exchanges reminiscences with other equine heroes, Bucephalus, Copenhagen, Marengo, Vonolel, Black Bess and their like. Though only a ranker he could tell them a few things for he was a tough customer.

At Mooi River I was given command of a squadron of the Imperial Light Horse and became proudly and firmly rooted in the regiment for the duration of the war.

CHAPTER II

MAFEKING, SOMALILAND

Its four sad candles dripping from their wicks,
The Southern Cross disconsolately swung,
And canted low its splintered crucifix,
While all around the wolfish winds gave tongue.
The Flaming Terrapin—Roy Campbell.

CHAPTER II

MOST of the survivors of the siege, both men and horses, quickly regained their normal condition. The gaunt cadaverous troopers and the scarecrow troop-horses responded generously to rest and good feeding, and within six weeks we were pronounced fit for active service and on our way to Durban to embark for an unknown destination. We were shipped to Capetown, and only when rumbling north by train into the Karroo Desert did it leak out that we were destined for the relief of Mafeking. Jubilation was great, the more so as many of us had friends or relations in the beleaguered town. Our force was to be a flying column (i.e., self-supporting) and was composed of less than a thousand rifles—all mounted except for a hundred infantrymen carried on wagons—and six Horse Artillery guns all under command of Bryan Mahon (commonly called the Mahout) a Colonel of the 8th Hussars, with an Egyptian reputation.

Time was pressing and we set off from railhead at once, covered by a full-dress demonstration of all arms under General Leslie Rundle on our right. Marching at sundown with a full moon we made thirty miles the first night and escaped the notice of the Boer intelligence. Lying up by day and marching each night we covered the 260 miles in ten days. The Boers got wind of us at Kraaipan, a day's march from Mafeking and attacked us in force in the bush late in the afternoon. My squadron forming the right flank guard took the brunt of this attack

and held off the Boers while the Column got clear. Darkness setting in we broke away, our rôle being to avoid action as much as possible until we had joined hands with Plumer's force coming from the north.

Somewhere about this time a messenger arrived with a note from Plumer asking, amongst other things, for our strength in men and guns. Having no arranged cypher this was ingeniously answered by the Mahout. "My rifles are ten times the number of the Naval and Military, My guns the number of the young Wards. My supplies Colonel of the 9th Lancers." The Naval and Military number in Piccadilly being 94 and the young Wards, the six sons of Lord Dudley, friends of both Commanders, while the Commanding Officer of the 9th was Little (nicknamed Small).

The night after the Kraaipan fight my squadron, now rearguard, had a curious experience. During a halt the two connecting files which linked us to the main body went to sleep and the column marched into the night without us. Waking myself from more than an hour's oblivion and finding everyone asleep round me I sent a scout forward only to find that the column had entirely disappeared. We had to work our way forward by following the spoor in the moonlight, and fortunately kept on the line, but it was not until after daylight that we saw the dust of the column in the distance and hurried on to join it. Fortunately no enemy had intervened. It was the kind of lapse that soldiers are shot for, but there are limits to men's endurance and we had then made nine night marches in succession with little rest for the outposts during the day and all the excitement of a brush with the Boers thrown in. I can still recall the agony of the struggle against the enemy Sleep, footing it mile

after mile rather than risk breaking one's neck from a fall on horseback at a walk. Truly there are times when one can sleep on fixed bayonets. That day and night we had no water and little the next, only scrapings from a muddy river bed. We had indeed dodged the Boers by taking what was looked upon as a waterless route, impracticable for a considerable body of troops.

Once in the vicinity Mafeking was relieved without much difficulty. On the 16th of May we joined hands with Plumer's Bushmen and attacked the Boers from two sides. They put up little resistance and seemed quite content to draw off, and next morning I enjoyed the experience of marching at the head of the column into a second beleaguered town.

Thus ended the unenterprising siege of a place that was defended with great skill and spirit. A few days before our arrival a kind of Foreign Legion commando, mostly Frenchmen, newly landed at Delagoa Bay did indeed actually penetrate into the heart of the town under command of one Eloff and captured a fort, where curiously, there was still some liquor to be found. The prisoners in the near-by jail, who in such crises were released and armed, saw to their surprise people dancing on the roof of the fort, one of whom waved a bottle and shouted, "Fashoda! Fashoda!" One of the jail-birds remarked, "That bloke don't know his ruddy geography," and brought him down with a bullet in the stomach. This was the only determined attack on a place which would not have stood siege a week against disciplined troops. The Boers could easily have rushed it at night if they had possessed the necessary cohesion.

The defenders of Mafeking though shut up for months longer than those of Ladysmith were in better physical

shape. Their very lack of numbers was an advantage and the fact that most of them were Colonials or acclimatized told in their favour; whilst the versatility and pluck of their Commander, Baden-Powell, kept up their spirits and *moral*. The air too was like champagne. Everyone did his or her bit, even the small boys who carried messages on bicycles and who appeared on the Siege stamps and were immortalized as the first Boy Scouts. The garrison was even able to make quite an impressive sortie the day of the relief. That night I dined with Lady Sarah Churchill and was actually regaled with turkey, cranberries and Veuve Clicquot, kept no doubt for this great occasion.

The Relief of Mafeking was a great day in England, and an occasion of wild rejoicing. The event was duly celebrated in London by an annual dinner of the besieged and relievers. But how fickle is fame! Some twenty years afterwards sitting next to a sweet young thing at luncheon and remembering suddenly that it was Mafeking Day and that I was due to go to the dinner that night, I asked her:

"Have you ever heard of Mafeking?"

After due reflection she replied,

"Wasn't it a soap?"

Sic transit. . . .

The Imperial Light Horse now marched to Johannesburg (its home town) with great rejoicings.

The end of the war being still not in sight, my case was again resuscitated and I was haled before the Commander-in-Chief at Pretoria to be summarily dealt with. Lord Roberts received me in his office. He was a dapper, alert little man with a grey moustache and imperial, and a keen and penetrating blue eye that made me feel like a Lower Fourth Form boy up before the headmaster. He proceeded to give me a proper dressing down.

"Do you imagine," he said, "that the British Army exists for your own especial convenience? Let me tell you, sir, that it is very much easier to leave the Army than to enter it." He then told me that I had been docked of all my promotion in the Artillery since my absence from Central Africa (thirty-five places on the list) and that I could consider myself very lucky not to have been removed from the Army. Having reduced me to proper proportions, for even when he stood up, for all my six foot four, I felt the smaller of the two, he then read me a flattering report and said I should be given back twenty-five places of promotion for distinguished service in the field. This done, he rose, and taking my arm said, "It's just what your father would have done, come and have some lunch." That was an example of the human touch which endeared "Bobs" to the whole Army throughout his long connexion with it. He went home soon after this covered with honour, his life shadowed by the loss of his only son who was killed trying to save Long's guns at Colenso, for which he was awarded the V.C., won by his father forty years earlier during the Mutiny.

I will not follow further the long and tedious ramifications of mopping up the Boers, their obstinate resistance encouraged by the inefficiency of our reinforcements pitted against Kitchener's iron determination.

I have a recollection of long stretches of monotony and immense marches in the bitter wind of the high veldt, frightful food and worse water, relieved by perfect fitness and the glorious birth of each new African day.

Wools-Sampson¹ took over command of the Imperial Light Horse, and after a time I was sent to Capetown with

¹ The late Colonel Sir Aubrey Wools-Sampson.

Karri-Davis¹ to raise a second regiment. These two remarkable men were diehards of the Jameson Raid, who had sung "God Save The Queen" under the muzzles of the Boer rifles in the Court House at Pretoria. They had been condemned to death and reprieved, serving a sentence in jail because they refused to give their parole not to fight the Boers again. Though the Imperial Light Horse were now a famous regiment, recruiting was difficult. There were still men to be found on the coast but they were a queer lot. Some were waiters, some sailors, some wore ear-rings and some could not understand English. But we had to make the best of it and given good officers it was my theory that you could make men out of monkeys. When in Capetown, Karri and I spent a night at Groote Schuur with Cecil Rhodes, and I was carried away by the great man's boyish enthusiasms.

My recollection of him is a massive grey-clad figure and great head crowned with tousled grey hair. He was provocative, and during dinner baited one of his guests, a Mr. Te Water. But afterwards, calling for more Kümmel, he had the great map of Africa spread out on the billiard-table and gave full rein to his imagination and his ambition.

"Here," he cried, in his high-pitched voice, running his finger from Salisbury via the Victoria Falls to Lake Tanganyika, "goes our railway to Cairo, and all this," with a comprehensive sweep of both arms, "will be the United States of South Africa."

The union of the two Rhodesias with South Africa was his urgent and constant desire, but Fate has decreed that they shall stand aloof of their own free will. I never saw him again and he died of heart disease before the end of the war.

¹ The late Colonel Karri-Davis.

We had not raised three hundred men when De Wet invaded Cape Colony, and I was dispatched with this untrained nucleus to garrison Hanover Road and operate from there. The Colony was in a ferment of disaffection and the situation very difficult. The fact that Olive Schreiner, the writer, lived at Hanover and had a husband with the enemy in the field, did not make it easier. Two companies of Coldstreams were a welcome addition to our little force and I was able to leave them on the railway and move north to the Orange River to try and block and mine the drifts with the aid of a naval detachment which had been sent up from Simonstown for this purpose.

However, though I dispatched parties to hold the drifts until we could get to them, my patrols were captured by the Boers who were over the river and on top of us before we had time to operate. I had a couple of days' running fight with them and sadly missed the seasoned troopers of the Imperial Light Horse. But Plumer's column of Australians came up in relief just in time and we were able to turn the tables on the elusive De Wet and eventually chased him out of the Colony.

After this I took over a small column of the 5th and 6th West Australians to help clean up the "bush veldt." I found them excellent men but lacking a sufficiency of trained officers, which was only natural. They had a peculiar swing in the saddle which even at a distance distinguished them from other mounted troops. Their chief fault was a good one: over-eagerness to get at the enemy. Our most promising round-up of a kloof with a big Boer laager in it was spoilt by lack of fire discipline: the beaters beginning to shoot before the stops and the guns had reached their places and driving the birds out over

empty butts. Some months later I returned to the 2nd Imperial Light Horse to take over command from Duncan McKenzie, who was to be promoted to a column. But my first action with them, the encirclement of a laager by night, was unlucky, and I got a nasty wound in the shoulder in a close-quarter fight as the Boers broke out firing from horseback. This put my right arm out of business for six months and I was sent to England after a year and a half in the field.

Peace was declared whilst I was at sea on my way back to South Africa, and our ship was deflected to St. Helena to repatriate the first batch of Boer prisoners. Many of these stubborn citizens refusing to take the oath of allegiance, could not go back to South Africa and went into exile in Madagascar and other places.

My father's sword had a strange history in this campaign. Left by me in Central Africa, it somehow found its way to the Transvaal, and for thirty years hung as a trophy in the home of Sir Andries Stockenström, where it was said to have been left the day before the battle of Diamond Hill. Then someone had the happy thought of trying to trace it through the number and by way of the sword-maker, Wilkinson, the India Office (for it was a John Company sword) and my eldest sister, who draws an Indian pension, it was eventually returned to me. I presented it to the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, and it is now worn by a young officer who has joined one of the former East India Company's batteries in India.

The war being over I was now glad to get home again, and found myself posted to the Egyptian Army as Staff Officer to Bryan Mahon, now Governor of Khartoum. On my way there (I was actually in Paris) these orders were cancelled and I was directed to take P. & O. to

Marseilles and proceed to Somaliland for three months' special service. I stayed there for nearly three years.

There had been one of the periodical "disasters"—at Errigo—and officers were urgently needed to reorganize the force. I found myself in company with Paul Kenna, John Gough, Mellis, Bruce and three or four others. I picked up some kit, ponies and camels at Aden and took ship to Berbera, whence we made our leisurely way to the front, getting some nice shooting on the way. We fell in with a pride of about a dozen lions and got separated in pursuit of them. Mellis unfortunately was seized by one and carried off, but Somalis with him, attacked and killed the beast. He was badly mauled and had to go back to England but recovered to add another name to the list of those whose lives have been saved by the bravery of their Somali gun-bearers.

Arrived at Burao, I now found myself again under command of Manning, who had been my chief in Central Africa, but he was content to let bygones be bygones and I was set to work to create a four-gun camel battery out of nothing at all. I think we made everything except the actual guns and ammunition. We even had to manufacture saddles and harness. But with Sikhs for gunners, Somalis for drivers and a stretch of imagination, I was able to report my battery in two months as ready to take the field.

Our first practice with live shell provided some diversion. Ismail, my Somali factotum and interpreter, a sharp and rather arrogant lad with a fine command of soldier-English learnt in the barrack-rooms of Aden, was sceptical about the value of artillery. I laid the first gun myself with care on a high termite mound 500 yards away. It dissipated with a fine explosion into a great column of red dust and smoke. "Do you think that will frighten the

Mullah, Ismail?" I asked. "If it 'it him it'll frighten him," he replied.

Attached to the 1st King's African Rifles, the regiment I had been in at Zomba, our first effort was to march across the Haud Desert with a convoy of 1,000 camels, carrying supplies to join Manning's force, which had come round by sea and landed at Obbia'. I rode the two hundred miles on my thoroughbred Egyptian riding camel Basha-felika (streak of lightning) with a white Somali pony trotting loose alongside. The climate was perfect, hot days followed by cool, balmy and windless nights. How well one slept in the desert! Hole for the hip, saddle for pillow, wrapped in a Jaeger blanket, head instinctively to the North Pole so that all the constellations of heaven revolved serenely round one's body. Waking at night one would say, "2.45 by old Betelgeuse, another hour's snooze." For months after these open-air cures I slept badly in a room and at the Staff College had my bed put under a big beech tree in the garden throughout the summer.

We duly met Manning at the Wells of Galkayu and formed a flying column about 1,000 strong. Any larger force was ruled out by transport difficulties, the mortality amongst the camels (our sole form of transport) being heavy. We moved on to the next wells, Galadi, sending spies out to locate the enemy, but more important still, to find water. Our progress from one water-hole to another, with droves of camels for eating purposes and a cloud of spies preceding us, was biblical, and I could never quite divest myself of the feeling that we were operating under the orders of Joshua, the son of Nun.

The Mullah's army was reported to be round Gumburroo, some hundred miles further inland across a bad

waterless patch of bush. At this time our intelligence service estimated his forces in front of us as 2,500 riflemen (mostly mounted), 5,000 to 6,000 horsemen, 16,000 spearmen, and about 4,000 spare ponies. At Galadi the transport question becoming acute it was decided to push on with a small flying column under Cobbe,¹ to reconnoitre and if possible seize the wells at Wardair and hold them for the main column. He was also to establish a water dump at Gumburroo. Indian troops required so much water that only half a company of Sikhs could be taken with the column which otherwise consisted of a troop of mounted infantry, two of my guns, 400 Yaos of the King's African Rifles, a few mounted Boers who had enlisted with us and four machine-guns. We were hampered with about 800 camels, mostly carrying water. We moved ponderously on fifty miles through the bush and built ourselves a zariba, in fairly open country, which, however, got much thicker ahead.

The "roads" to Wardair, which we were to reconnoitre, had apparently, like other objects of interest marked on our maps, ceased to exist. It must be remembered that there were no villages and that printed names of localities so important to us often meant nothing to the inhabitants. However rain had fallen here and the rocky pools were full. After a night spent in our zariba, scouts reported that there were now many dervishes in front of us and Cobbe decided to send out strong reconnoitring parties first to fill water-tins and secondly to locate the dervishes and if possible to draw them on to the zariba.

One of these parties, however, got involved with the enemy about three miles out, and Cobbe dispatched Major Plunkett with a company of King's African Rifles,

¹ The late General Sir Alexander Cobbe, V.C.

fifty Sikhs and two maxims to bring them in. But Plunkett seems to have interpreted his orders liberally and adding the half-company which he was sent to assist to his own force marched on until he found the enemy. He had left our camp at 9.45 a.m., and two hours later wounded fugitives began to arrive with the news that his force had been destroyed. It was apparently about six miles from us and in the thick bush we had scarcely heard firing. The column, in square formation, seemed to have been overwhelmed by fanatical charges on the part of the dervishes under command it was said of the Mullah himself. The Mounted Infantry who had been hotly engaged in another reconnaissance were sent out to verify the news. They found that all firing had ceased and the dervishes were everywhere and there was no doubt that Plunkett's force had been destroyed.

This put Cobbe in a difficult situation. He had kept the minimum number of rifles to defend the transport and water and he believed the enemy to be also between us and our base. To move out would be to leave the camp at the mercy of the enemy, to lose our water supply and probably to be defeated in detail. So we dug ourselves in, made a big bush zariba and cleared the field of fire round waiting for the attack which we hoped would come to give us a chance of avenging our friends. But not until after nightfall did the dervishes advance, and then half-heartedly, and a few rounds from guns and rifles were enough to drive them off. They had learnt by long experience not to attack us unless we were on the move.

Meanwhile a runner had got through to the main column and next afternoon Paul Kenna arrived with his Mounted Infantry, and I, for one, was very glad to see him.

We withdrew leaving the battlefield in the hands of the enemy. Our losses in this affair were nine officers and two hundred men killed and missing, and thirty wounded, or about half the force.

A northern column under John Gough had meanwhile engaged the Mullah's force, and had a sharp scrap as also had our Abyssinian allies, but owing to difficulties of communication these attacks had not been simultaneous and the Mullah (though no student of Clausewitz) profited from being on "interior lines."

John Gough in this engagement won the Victoria Cross. He had recommended for that honour two of his officers, Captains Rolland and Walker, for rescuing the mortally wounded Captain Bruce from capture by the dervishes. It afterwards transpired that Gough had himself played an heroic part in the incident and all three received the Victoria Cross. As both his father and uncle had won this honour in the Indian Mutiny it formed the only instance of three Victoria Crosses being awarded to one family. Like his brother Hubert, John Gough seemed destined to rise high in his profession, but his life was cut short at the first Battle of Ypres when Chief of the Staff to Sir Douglas Haig's Corps.

This was the second campaign that had ended in disaster and the Mullah was evidently not so insane after all. The method in his madness was to draw out his enemy's line of communications until he could only maintain an insignificant force at the front and then to entice this out still further and fall upon it.

After mature consideration the Government decided to abandon this effort and to roll up the force to Bohotle, north of the Haud Desert. The rainy season was now at hand and we recrossed the desert to the plateau of

Bohotle where preparations were soon under way for a new campaign.

Meanwhile the Mullah—Mahomed-I-Bin-Abdullah—wrote to Colonel Swaine, commanding the Northern Communications, inviting us to leave him in peace to rule his country and to return to our own.

"I like war," he wrote, "you do not. God willing, I will take many more rifles from you, but I will not take your country. I have no forts or houses or cultivation, no silver or gold for you to take. I have no artificers. The country is jungle and of no use. There is wood and stone and many ant-heaps. But all you can get from me is war, nothing else. We fight by God's blessing and God fights for us. God is with me as I write." Then a practical P.S. asking whether Colonel Swaine would kindly give him some ammunition in exchange for a captured machine-gun which he did not understand.

In view of fresh troops coming from India my camel battery was disbanded and I had an interval of rest which I utilized by taking the Staff College examination, writing my papers on a soap-box under a thorn-tree in the wilderness.

The Mullah made use of the lull to get out of his awkward situation up against the Abyssinian border and to cross our lines of communication unmolested into the Nogal Valley where there was good grazing. I accompanied a flying column which went out to try and cut him off, but we were too late, only getting evidence of the savagery of his followers against any unfortunate natives who were slow enough to be caught. We found several new-born babies left in the bush, one or two of which were alive and had to be adopted.

The new campaign was to be run by India and under

command of Sir Charles Elliott. Troops and luxuries began to arrive, and it was soon evident that no expense was this time to be spared in laying the Mad Mullah's ghost. My new task was a congenial one, that of raising levies from amongst the Somali horsemen. I invited the various headmen in to a durbar and told them the terms, and in a very short space of time our numbers swelled to nearly a thousand, men of each tribe joining under their own Akils. I parted with half my army to Major the Hon. J. Beresford.¹ My regiment we named the Tribal Horse and his the Gadabursi Horse. I had with me three other officers the senior of whom was Captain Neil Malcolm,³ and a doctor.

By this time I had got to know something of the Somalis and found them rather extraordinary people. Intelligent, conceited, gay, with a strong sense of humour, they were a curious mixture of dash and timidity in action. Though of obscure origin their racial pride was strong. They had no fear of wild animals but were rather scared of the Mullah and his dervishes and we could often judge of his proximity by the intense and devout praying to Allah that went on.

We had a good opportunity to train our men being sent out at once a day's march ahead of the advanced base to furnish a screen to cover the concentration of the army. This gave us plenty of practice at patrol and reconnaissance work and at the same time we trained our horses, which were all Somali and Abyssinian ponies, not to expect a drink more than once a day and sometimes to go without water for longer. This stood us in good stead for on our first reconnaissance under Kenna we went fifty-two hours without water and covered a hundred miles with a running

¹ Now Lord Decies.

² Major-General Sir N. Malcolm.

fight thrown in and only lost nine horses out of over three hundred from exhaustion. Some of these (belonging to the Mounted Infantry) were Arabs and Indian country-breds which had been similarly trained. The marching pace for mounted troops on all occasions was five miles per hour and this pace the riding camels and ponies could maintain for very long periods without undue fatigue.

The above reconnaissance successfully located the Mullah's main force in the oasis of Jidballi. We came down to it in the dawn and hundreds of dervishes streamed out to attack us. We engaged them for a time and then prudently withdrew, our object being attained. How easy nowadays to send a 'plane over! Half an hour's work and the wireless would have transmitted all the information any General would require. It would also have saved us several minor disasters and months of preparations. So might a field telephone between Grouchy at Gembloux, and Napoleon at La Belle Alliance have changed the destiny of Europe. But the undeveloped peoples are the chief sufferers from modern invention which has greatly intensified their vulnerability and they now stand no chance whatever of holding their own.

I was never quite sure that Sir Charles Elliott appreciated my levies. He came out once to inspect them, a long hot ride from the nearest post. I went half-way to meet him with an escort. After riding for an hour, he dismounted and swept the country with his glasses.

"What," he said, "is that seething dung-heap I see on the horizon?" "That, sir," I replied, "is my camp." It was an apt description.

However, on our arrival the Tribal Horse, 600 strong, was decorously formed up and really made a good show.

They marched past the General at their slow trot of five miles an hour, singing their deep-throated war-songs. I had forbidden any galloping as pace always went to their heads. But when they wheeled prettily into line and saluted with raised rifles this instruction was forgotten, and they performed the time-honoured evolution of charging forward with wild yells and pulling up their horses on their haunches as close as possible to the honoured guest. I never knew whether it was the General and his staff or their horses which lost their nerve, but the whole party suddenly wheeled about and disappeared in a cloud of dust. I collected them after a time with suitable explanations and apologies, which were, however, of no avail. The General would not even stay to lunch.

The Somalis who have a great sense of humour thought this a great joke. They often behaved like naughty children and had to be treated as such.

One night after we had had a man flogged for theft, an unpopular punishment as the Somali has great pride, one of the Akils came into the hut where the white officers slept and shook me gently. "Get up," he said, "and escape quickly. They are going to cut your throats to-night." I woke one of the others and talked it over with him. We decided that nothing could be done about it and anyway it sounded incredible. Whether they really meant it and changed their minds or whether it was one of their practical jokes we never knew. But the next morning when we woke up, the camp, generally a Bedlam, seemed unnaturally tranquil, and on going out I found there were our 600 horses on their picket lines and barring a few Sikhs (the machine-gun crews) and the white signallers, plus my interpreter and the cook, not a

man was to be seen. I called for Handula, the interpreter, and asked the explanation of this phenomenon.

"Yes," he said with a grand gesture, "they have all gone. They are dissatisfied with your Excellency's administration and they are returning to their homes." "Oh, are they," I said, "with our rifles and ammunition—not much!"

Anyway, they had not deserted to the enemy, for we could see them trekking slowly away towards our own main body. I got the heliograph working to the advanced post and told Kenna what had happened and asked him to send out some British Mounted Infantry to head them back again, but on no account to allow any shooting. This was tactfully accomplished, and towards sundown the mutineers reappeared singing, their honour having been apparently vindicated. By that time the horse lines were in a filthy mess and I ordered them to clean up the camp before any rations were issued. After a short discussion they set to work with great good humour and shouts of laughter as if carting dung on a long-empty stomach was their favourite pastime.

There were two men of the Habr Unis tribe of the same name, Abdullah Ahmed, who caused endless confusion on the pay-roll and frequently accused each other of impersonation. They were rather alike though unrelated, and each refused to take another name. One pay-day after a loud wrangle between them I told them it was the last time they would get their pay unless one of them changed his name. They went off in high dudgeon as if insulted. A few days later one of our patrols came in singing and laughing. The patrol leader came up to report, followed by his men. They had located a dervish *karria* and had had a brush with them killing many (oriental exaggeration) and losing two men whom they had subsequently found

with their heads cut off. I asked what they were laughing about. "Oh," they said, "don't you see the joke? One of them was Abdullah Ahmed. You won't have any more trouble with *him* on pay-day." The bystanders shook with laughter. I said it was a bad joke especially as the Abdullah Ahmed who had been killed was a good soldier and the survivor a shirker.

The final battle was a well-conducted and spectacular affair which might have been staged in Rushmoor Arena.

The gods decreed that after his two successes, the Mullah should be mad enough to remain round the wells of Jidballi and await Sir Charles Elliott. Had he chosen to repeat his usual manœuvre of retirement, he would have seriously embarrassed our force, now larger and more cumbrous than ever, and might have dealt us another shrewd blow. But he sat confidently in his oasis and the whole army moved down on him by a forced night march in square formation. The baggage had been left in the bivouac of the previous day. The front face of the square held two mountain guns and numerous machine-guns and bristled with the rifles of four battalions. On the wings were the cavalry, irregulars in front supported by British and Indian Mounted Infantry, and the Bikanir Camel Corps.

I pushed my regiment well on ahead of the left flank and at dawn found myself overlooking the oasis with the enemy still undisturbed. Here I dismounted the Somalis and made them lie down—the only way at such a time of keeping them under control. We were soon seen by the dervishes who began firing and moving out in our direction. We returned their fire with interest, but as soon as they heard camels and saw the main body moving slowly down the slope they turned their attention to it, probably imagining that it consisted chiefly of transport

and loot. They streamed out in thousands like angry bees towards it, firing raggedly. The ponderous formation halted and came into action. The awakening was rude. In half a minute a murderous fire opened from guns, machine-guns and rifles. The dervishes never reached the square, but fell in hundreds in the high yellow grass, and although they rallied and led by their Hadjis made several brave attempts in a few minutes they were overwhelmed by our fire and broke and fled.

No need to order my commando to mount. They were in the saddle and away, *ventre à terre*, after the retreating dervishes before I reached my own horse. Down the rough slope they sailed, a streak of grey horses and flying red togas, yelling their battle-cry. The pursuit was long and vigorous. The rabble were herded briskly along, the Tribal Horsemen shooting and spearing in their midst, while regular Mounted Infantry fired into them from either flank. They were given a lesson from which it took them long to recover.

My command scattered to the four winds and before long I found myself jogging along amongst a mass of breathless fugitives with only my faithful Handula behind me. Such an event was not altogether unanticipated, and we were both well armed. I carried a rifle on the saddle and two Webley-Fosberry revolvers on my belt and plenty of ammunition. We shot any man we saw with a rifle, as these were the backbone of the Mullah's army, disregarding the spearmen who were mostly slaves and who seemed to have no fight in them. Unfortunately I was knocked over at close quarters by a big bullet from a French "Gras" rifle, which went through my shoulders so near the spine that I rolled off my horse and fell flat on my face and was for a time completely paralysed.

Handula Aman remained with me and I heard him shooting continuously. The pursuit passed on and we were left alone, but he continued to shoot, making quite sure of any dead dervishes lying about (and there were a good many). Kipling's "he's generally shamming when he's dead" is an apt description. This may seem blood-thirsty conduct, but outside the danger to ourselves any wounded left in the bush at night only became the prey of lions and hyenas. We were not found for many hours, fortunately, I think, as the bullet had touched my left lung and there was a good deal of hæmorrhage. But as in the case of my friend, Shore, at Acton Homes, the wound was given time to seal itself before I was eventually transported.

After Jidballi the column marched on and the wounded, of which there were few, were sent back under escort. Amongst the killed was Tommy Lister, Lord Ribblesdale's heir. He was "galloping" for the Commander-in-Chief and was, I believe, bringing me a message, but rode into a crowd of mounted dervishes who were difficult to distinguish from the Tribal Horse. I myself was carried in state by Indian bearers in a litter for the whole 250 miles to the coast. This should normally have finished one off, but I got better every day. The doctors put this down to the healthy state of my blood after eighteen months' open-air life on the Somali plateau. There is no doubt that the water we frequently had to drink from old wells had purifying qualities. It was nasty enough to have become famous, and we sometimes talked of forming a company to bottle and transport it to Europe.

Although the Mullah's whole army was not engaged, this affair broke up his power and prestige for ten years, though his ghost was not finally laid to rest until 1914.

I reached Berbera sufficiently recovered to cable to the War Office for permission to proceed direct to China to join the expedition then setting out for Peking, whither my nursing sister, Maud, had gone from South Africa. However, the local medical board took a different view and I was sent home with a recommendation not to reach England before May. I spent the intervening weeks agreeably enough at Monte Carlo.

CHAPTER III

INTERLUDE FOR EDUCATION AND MARRIAGE

Teacher, tender, comrade, wife,
A fellow-farer true through life,
Heart-whole and soul-free
The august father
Gave to me.

R. L. Stevenson.

CHAPTER III

AFTER this campaign I was given a nomination to join the Staff College at the end of the year, and in the interval put in five months with a German family near Hanover working at the language.

At Camberley I found friends in Cobbe, John Gough and Hoskins, who had been in Somaliland with me, and Hubert Gough, now a professor. Rawlinson was Commandant and a very good and versatile one. Once used to going back to school the Staff College is a good place and affords about the only chance an officer gets in the Army of working and exchanging ideas with his contemporaries of all arms who take their profession seriously. While at Camberley I spent all my leave abroad, either going to foreign manœuvres and battlefield tours or to brush up languages, visiting countries I had not seen, Norway, Sweden and Denmark. Fired by Henderson's "Stonewall Jackson" I also went for a walking tour in the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia to make some sketches of the battlefields.

At the end of my two years I was sent to the War Office for six months' work in the German section of the Intelligence under William Thwaites.¹ This meant admission, as it were, to the "inner ring" and I could soon assure myself that the War Office was far from being the foolish and effete institution its detractors would have one believe. It also gave me visits abroad, the most interesting being in the capacity of "bottle-washer" at

¹ General Sir W. Thwaites, D.M.I. after the war.

the Hague Peace Conference in 1907. As far as I remember the German Bismarck-like Baron Marshal von Bieberstein dominated this gathering. We wanted American co-operation, but the Germans haughtily refused. I never heard the word "peace" mentioned, though several agreements were made about war, which failed to survive the test of reality, notably the abolition of submarine mining. The same strong personality was later to Germanize the Turkish Empire, extract important concessions from it and the promise of an alliance in war, many weeks before we were aware of it. The last post of this remarkable man was at the Embassy in London, but he died before he could do us any more harm. His son came to the Embassy for some years after the War. He was a Rhodes Scholar and, like his father, inordinately tall.

In 1908 I found a congenial post as Chief Instructor at the Cavalry School, then at Netheravon. This year I married Florence Marshall, the widow of Major Wilfred Marshall, of the Grenadier Guards, who had a small boy at Eton. We spent our honeymoon at Brownsea Castle, lent us by my friend, Charles van Raalte, who had gone with his family to India. The German Emperor visited England that year and there was talk of his wanting Brownsea for his sojourn. To our relief he went to Highcliffe, Edward Stuart-Wortley's house near Christchurch. I never saw van Raalte again, as he died in India. The only other sojourners on the island were Baden-Powell and a mixed lot of boys trying out the Great Idea that was to run through the whole world. This was the first scout camp.

We took a house in the village of Fittleton, close to the Cavalry School, and also rented a little hunting-box in Malmesbury next to the Bell. Lord Ribblesdale kept a

couple of horses in our stables and came down when he could from London. Many a good hunt we had with the Duke of Beaufort and the Vale of White Horse and I have lively recollections of "the Ancestor" sailing along on his own line according to his wont. He was a beautiful horse-man and could be relied on to make a horse look worth fifty sovereigns more than his value. We sometimes stayed at Gisburne to hunt with the Ribblesdale Hounds, then a wild black-and-tan pack. Ribblesdale was a picturesque figure and a unique combination of aristocrat and bohemian. He was the best of company and one of the most charming personalities I have ever met. His life was deeply shadowed by the loss of Lady Ribblesdale, who was a sister of Mrs. Asquith, and of his two sons, Tommy in Somaliland, and Charles of brilliant promise with the Naval Division in Gallipoli. His three daughters, Lady Wilson, Mrs. Percy Wyndham¹ and Lady Lovat inherited the rare charm of their parents.

That winter we spent a fortnight at Saumur studying the *Ecole d'Application* and the *Châteaux* of the Loire, making friends with French officers and hunting the wild boar in the forests of Touraine. I also visited the Reit-Schule at Hanover and found German methods a good deal behind those of the French. I should not like to say where our own came in order of merit, but although the Cavalry School was in its infancy our army horse-mastership at all events was second to none.

Towards the end of the hunting season I had a bad fall and was laid up for some time at Easton Grey where we had been staying. Here I made closer acquaintance with the Asquiths, old friends of my wife's, and fell under their charm. Henry Asquith was a good talker on any

¹ Now Lady Westmoreland.

subject, but if led up to the possibilities of a war with Germany, then already looming big in the General Staff mind, he would jink off like a pig from a spear and seemed unwilling to face the tremendous issue or even to admit such a premise for discussion. I think he and his wife regarded me as a stupid soldier who wanted a war instead of one who wanted the country to be ready for it.

Being unable to shake off the effects of concussion I was given six months' leave, most of which we spent in Norway on a salmon river. While there I was offered a majority in the 4th Dragoon Guards about to return from India. As promotion in the Artillery was very stagnant I accepted and eventually joined the regiment at Brighton. The barracks here were poor and inadequate, and we had to keep a squadron at Woolwich, but the men after long exile East of Suez were in the seventh heaven. We took a house in Percival Terrace on the front and in those days I could keep my ponies there and canter over the Downs to barracks without let or hindrance across ground that is now solid with villas. My daughter was born at this time.

I was glad when the regiment moved to Tidworth and joined the 2nd Cavalry Brigade under De Lisle whom I had met in India as adjutant of the Durham Light Infantry. He was best known as having led an infantry regiment to victory in the contest for the Inter-Regimental Polo Cup, until then a sinecure for the Cavalry. This was done by sheer hard work and organization and a genius for training which marked him out early for command. We lived at the inn at Eversley, a tiny hamlet in the middle of Salisbury Plain.

Though now nearly forty and a Brevet-Major of ten

years' standing, I found myself junior Major in the 4th with little prospect of command. So that when in 1910 I was offered the post of Military Attaché at Brussels, the Hague, Copenhagen and Christiania, I accepted. Before leaving England I had an interesting interview with King Edward VII, sitting by the fire with him in his study in Buckingham Palace. Over his cigar the great man unbent and talked freely of life on the Continent, of the personalities I should meet at foreign Courts and of their characteristics, displaying a wide knowledge of the diplomatic problems of the various Legations to which I was attached. One could not but be struck by the depth of human understanding that lay behind his remarks. Though he talked to me as man to man there was never any doubt of the dignity of the King. Years after, when driving in a fiacre along the sea-coast at Biarritz I was reminded of this conversation. I asked the driver why the people of Biarritz had erected a statue to King Edward. He said, "We loved him well, he was human."

My predecessor, Yarde-Buller, had lived at the Hague but given our choice we decided on Brussels. We had friends there and its proximity to the Berlin-Paris axis gave it a peculiar interest for me. So we found a gay little house in the *Avenue des Gaulois* close to the *Cinquante-naire*, well placed strategically between the Legation, the golf links and the beautiful beech woods of Terveuren where we could ride.

King Edward's reign was but short, and I was present that year at his funeral in charge of a detachment of Danish Guard Hussars, of which regiment he was Colonel. To participate in a picturesque mission to the Northern Courts under Lord Granard to announce the accession also fell to my lot, and at the Coronation of King George V

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I was in attendance on the Crown Prince of Denmark. This gave one a close-up of pageantry, sufficient for a lifetime, and the full-dress balls and sumptuous parties in the mansions of the great were memorable. A ball at Stafford House with the beautiful Duchess of Sutherland at the top of the winding staircase receiving the guests, remains in my mind a picture of the high-water mark of pre-War entertainments. The lovely bejewelled women were well set off by the richness and variety of foreign uniforms, many of which were seen in England for the last time.

Although in mourning for the death of King Leopold II, Brussels was a gay little place. In fact we soon found that the frequent spells of Court mourning to which diplomatic society was liable were blessings in disguise, and afforded a welcome relief from large and often dreary functions without interfering with our private amusements. One of our first experiences was at a tea-party in high society. On entering the house we heard shrieks and the sound of a heavy fall. When I expressed concern the *maître d'hôtel* replied:

"Ce sont seulement les dames qui jouent au Bumps!" and on entering the salon we found the ladies of the Court and the diplomatic circle in their widows' weeds hilariously pushing each other off their chairs.

It was an era of practical jokes and one of ours was so successful that it took some living down.

Freddy Blackwood¹ arrived unexpectedly from London one evening when we were about to give a rather pompous dinner party. Being a born actor and a loss to the stage he hastened down to the Monnaie Theatre to be made up, and returned half an hour later for dinner calling himself the Grand Duke Dimitri. It must be remembered that

¹ Became Lord Dufferin and was killed in an air accident.

at this time in Paris and Brussels Russian Grand Dukes ranked next to the Deity. One dropped one's voice reverently when speaking of them, much as a financier might when he mentions a million pounds. Freddy's graciousness to the curtsying ladies, his dignity and his inimitable broken English made the party a complete success. Out of politeness everyone copied him, drinking Kümmel with the fish and smoking all through dinner. After dinner the ladies were brought up to him one by one for a little private conversation in a corner, and he asked them to name their favourite jewels and took their addresses. I was relieved when according to plan my soldier servant, with a face like a wall, announced that a Royal carriage had arrived to take his Imperial Highness to the Palace. When he kissed me good-bye on both cheeks it was almost too much! He was voted charming. But the joke quickly leaked out through the Russian Embassy in Paris, and it was discovered that the Grand Duke was on the Riviera. Consternation and wrath! But one of the advantages of my job was that I had four countries to visit and we escaped next day to Norway.

My work also required me to be frequently in London and I was able to keep in touch with the 4th Dragoon Guards and had the great satisfaction of seeing them win the Inter-Regimental Polo Championship in 1911, a good performance for a poor regiment recently home from foreign service. Shortly before the tournament our No. 1, Lamont, was killed by a horse falling back on him, and his place was taken by Carton de Wiart without great polo qualifications but a hard rider. The backs were Hunter and Mathew-Lannowe. An ancient grudge born by de Wiart against the back of our most dangerous opponents contributed no little to our success, as did

also a grey Maltese-cat-like pony played by Hornby. This animal appeared on the ground an indecent number of times, and captured the crowd by its diligent pursuit of the ball and knowledge of the game. Lord Roberts gave away the Cup and by special request Grey Dawn trotted up into the pavilion and received a cheer and a lump of sugar from Lady Aileen.

With four countries to visit our four years passed quickly, and the work to be done was interesting, especially all that related to German preparations for war along the Belgian frontier. The Franco-German situation became quickly more and more tense, causing war scares in 1911 and 1913, and generally keeping Europe in a jumpy condition, and which was more serious, twice getting me recalled from leave, once in the act of drawing a bead on a reindeer.

Following on the Entente with France and our military understanding with her, which seemed to me to offer us all the disadvantages and none of the advantages of an alliance, it now occurred to the General Staff that we were singularly ignorant of what Belgium's attitude would be in the case of the expected violation of her territory by Germany or of how we could best come to her aid. I was, therefore, instructed by Sir John French personally to get in touch with the Belgian Chief of Staff, General Jungbluth, and to try out the ground. If the Belgians were willing to talk I was to get all possible information as to feasibility and assistance available for British landings at Ostend, Zeebrugge and Antwerp in support of the Belgian Army. These conversations duly took place, all correctly qualified by the premise "Germany has invaded Belgium—what shall we do?" I understand that the matter was kept closely confidential between the King,

Jungbluth and the Foreign Minister. On one occasion I was asked what would be Great Britain's attitude if Germany invaded Belgium and Belgium did not appeal for help. I replied that I had no authority to say but that I felt sure that the British Government would regard intervention under the terms of the Treaty as not only a duty but a right. At the same time I added, an appeal for help from Belgium would enormously strengthen the hand of our Government by rousing the sentiment of the country.

During the hasty evacuation of Brussels the Foreign Office archives seem to have been left behind and captured and the Germans used them to try and prove that Belgian neutrality was already compromised by these conversations. This, however, was by no means the case, as they were carried on in perfect correctitude, always presupposing a violation of Belgian territory as having already taken place.

Henry Wilson,¹ then D.M.O., grasped more clearly than anyone the significance of German preparations. It was he who first maintained that "Shining Armour," as he called the Kaiser, was prepared to fight France, Russia and ourselves, if necessary, and who also, by persistent investigation and reconnaissance (often personal), established that the Germans could put three divisions on every road between Basle and Brussels and must inevitably march through Belgian territory to make their full strategic deployment. He seemed to have had an intuitive knowledge of the Schlieffen Plan of Moltke's predecessor which provided for a tremendous blow on the right flank through Northern Belgium and even Holland. We were continually making fresh discoveries in the Ardennes, new camps, detraining stations, railway

¹ Later Field-Marshal.

sidings and new roads that all seemed directed "nach Paris." I used to spend a good deal of time at Spa or Vielsalm, where a friend of ours, de Sinçay, had a pack of hounds and enabled me to combine business and pleasure.

For the benefit of spy-craft in general I may disclose that an expensive high-powered car and a good-looking girl are the best passports to forbidden areas. Thus equipped I once visited the German camp at Elsenborn, which was out of bounds, drank beer in the officers' casino and sent off a picture post card of it to the Director of Military Intelligence.

By the end of my time in Brussels, April 1914, there was no doubt that the weight of German naval and military opinion was for war. There was on the General Staff, however, a minority of officers who saw more clearly and were actually opposed to war because they feared that aggression would bring the whole world in against Germany. I believe that my German colleague at Brussels, Renner, who became Military Attaché in London in 1914 was one of these, and having made his views known suffered in consequence, being given a post on the lines of communication and receiving no promotion throughout the War.

Our General Staff, however, did not expect war until 1915 owing to the backwardness of German naval preparations, which included the completion of the Navy Bill and the deepening and widening of the Kiel Canal to take modern battleships. In the spring of 1914 there was some talk of my remaining on at Brussels over what we called "the War Period," i.e., until after the harvest and until troops had gone out on peace manœuvres, but I wrote to Henry Wilson that I could not see a cloud in the sky,

to which he agreed, and in April we came back to London.

We arrived home at the height of the Curragh crisis, brought on by the decision of the Government to carry its Home Rule policy in the face of the desperate opposition of Ulster. The circumstances were complicated and obscure, but it was understood that the military were to be used to threaten the North, a policy which Lord Wolseley and Lord Roberts (both Field-Mmarshals) had warned the Government in the House of Lords would wreck the Army. Whatever may have been the Government's intentions, the temper of the Army was shown when General Hubert Gough, Commanding the 3rd Cavalry Brigade at the Curragh, with fifty-seven out of seventy officers, understanding that they had been given their choice, resigned their Commissions rather than march north.

On my return I had the customary interview with King George and had intended to describe the feverish condition of the Continent, where everyone was talking of the coming trial of strength. The Balkans had been in the melting-pot for three years and a general war seemed inevitable. But the Curragh incidents monopolized the conversation, and the King, walking up and down the room, dwelt on them at some length. He spoke strongly on the subject of maintaining discipline and said such a thing could never have happened in the Navy, a natural attitude towards the Service in which he had been brought up and which he regarded with such affection and pride. The melancholy events at Invergordon years afterwards are no consolation. Each incident has its lessons and both show the danger of handling Service questions, whether of principle or of pay without understanding and tact. Having sent in my papers the previous

day as a protest against the treatment of Gough and his officers, I kept silent on the subject. I believe there was a drawerful of resignations at the War Office at that time, but when the incident blew over I heard no more of my letter. I wonder how many people realize that the Government of the day had nearly driven the Army into mutiny and the country into the madness of civil war on the eve of Armageddon!

I was now sent to Albania to report on the progress of the new gendarmerie which was being raised under Dutch officers. The throne had been accepted by Prince William of Wied who lived at Durazzo, with the support of an Italian cruiser in the harbour. It seemed to me very unlikely that he would keep the throne for long as he did not go into the interior to show himself or to get acquainted with his high-spirited and difficult subjects. The new Mpret made no appeal to the swashbuckling Albanians in the hinterland and the towns were seething with intrigue and disaffection.

I went first to Scutari to see Essad Pacha, the Governor, and to get a written safe-conduct to help me through the country. I took the precaution of having this pass translated as there had been a recent case of a foreigner whose pass in Turkish read, "The bearer deserves a sound flogging." On the road to Elbasan while jogging along the mountain track followed by my henchman and mule loaded with dollars, we were met by a fusilade from the heights. My guide protested loudly and a shouting match ensued which resulted in a magnificent specimen of mountaineer armed to the teeth dropping down to apologize and explain that he thought I was an Italian. The people are fierce and lawless but very hospitable, and I was passed on in safety from one village headman to the

next and grew expert in sitting on the floor and eating stewed kid and rice out of the common dish with my fingers. The Dutch officers were doing splendidly and the gendarmerie was rapidly becoming an efficient force, but like many other good things of 1914 its further growth was soon arrested.

I returned to England and rejoined the 4th Dragoon Guards at Tidworth in time for summer training. Mullens from the Bays had been brought in to command and the regiment was in good shape. It seemed curious to be commanding a squadron again just as I was doing fifteen years before in the South African War, having in the interim commanded two light horse regiments on active service. But of such is the British Army. I set to work to train my squadron to as high a standard as possible, the more so as it now looked as if I should soon be leading it into battle.

On one of those hot June week-ends of 1914 the German Military Attaché came down and stayed with me in barracks. There was a lively Saturday guest-night when we entertained another regiment, and high spirits were released all round. My guest was horrified at the disorder. To see me having my nose rubbed on the floor by a subaltern was bad enough, but when a colonel put on the gloves with a captain of his weight and got knocked into the fireplace, his nerve broke and he asked permission to retire. I would have liked to have seen the letter he wrote to Berlin for the Emperor's eye. Coming on top of the Curragh incidents, with Egypt in a ferment, India disloyal and the Dominions apparently apathetic, it would be but another evidence that the British Army would have all its work cut out minding its own business at home without interfering on the Continent.

Our regular army, even with the addition of the newly

organized territorials for which we had to thank Lord Haldane, was indeed lamentably inadequate for a Continental war to which it seemed we were now pledged. Except for the Army and a few enthusiasts, the preachings of Lord Roberts—who never lost an opportunity of making his voice heard—that it was the right and duty of every able-bodied man to be trained to the defence of his country, fell, as it would to-day, on deaf ears. Most politicians regarded him as a nuisance. Did they ever change their minds when these same able-bodied men were required to face the war without equipment or training? It was a commonplace to say that the country would never stand any form of compulsion. But when have the British refused to tread the path of duty in an emergency? That the United States should stomach conscription looked like a fairy story, but they swallowed it when their time came with scarcely a dissentient voice. How little these people knew the country and how fortunate for them that we were covered by the French during the two years that it took us to develop an army. One of the results of this short-sighted and spineless policy was the terrible wastage of the best of the nation. How many officers like myself who took over ill-trained and ill-equipped troops after long months of precious time wasted, did not curse and curse again the apathy and weakness of the successive governments which turned a blind eye to the writing on the wall. Bound to uphold the clearly menaced integrity of Belgium, regarded by the General Staff for a decade as the probable *casus belli*, tied to the French by silken knots that were soon to become hooks of steel, our standing army was totally inadequate to fulfil our obligations while our reserves in men and material were insignificant.

Kitchener was brought into the Cabinet pledged to the voluntary system and loyally fulfilled the pledge even to the point of becoming an obstacle to conscription when the stream of volunteers had dried up and the belated necessity for it was eventually driven home in the minds of his colleagues. He has often been criticized for not building his New Army on Haldane's territorial foundations, a proceeding which would probably have given us better and quicker results. It is said that, having served in the Franco-Prussian War of 1871 and seen the French Territorials throwing away their arms, the word was anathema to him and he set out to make an army on a new model. Fortunately the valour and enthusiasm of our citizen army was unquestionable and made up for many errors, but it was long months before we could put our whole strength into the field and not even the blindest optimist could expect such grace a second time.

There are still those who claim that had Lord Roberts's scheme been adopted it would have been regarded by Germany as a provocative measure, and might even have precipitated war. But surely we know now that Germany was determined on war in her own time, at the height of her military and naval power, regardless of the situation of other countries.

CHAPTER IV

THE WAR—MONS AND THE RETREAT

General Headquarters,
Aix-la-Chapelle,
19th August, 1914.

"It is my Royal and Imperial Command that you concentrate your energies for the immediate present upon one single purpose, and that is, that you address all your skill and all the valour of my soldiers to exterminate the treacherous little Army of the English and walk over General French's contemptible little Army."—*The Kaiser's Order.*

"This makes me naturally love a Soldier, and honour those tattered and contemptible regiments that will die at the command of a sergeant."—*Sir Thomas Browne.*

CHAPTER IV

THE pistol-shot of Serajevo which set alight the European powder magazine found the six divisions of the Expeditionary Force with its cavalry division ready and waiting. Agreement seems to be general that what there was of the Army in August 1914 was well trained, and its plans for mobilization and the difficult concentration on the other side of the Channel perfect down to the last detail. Certainly the 2nd Cavalry Brigade to which I belonged was in a high state of efficiency and was quite ready to fight anybody. There was no hatred of Germany but in the true mercenary spirit we would equally readily have fought the French. Our motto was, "We'll do it. What is it?" But the invasion of Belgium, the breaking of a treaty and the tales of rapine stiffened public opinion, and when King Albert heroically accepted the challenge and called on us for assistance in his momentous message of 4th August, the die was cast. Public enthusiasm carried the British Government along with it. This was of interest to me, confirming as it did my view expressed in the conversations with General Jungbluth. The fact that the Germans were invading Belgium on both banks of the Meuse proved Henry Wilson right in his strategic forecast. The Germans, far from marching south of that river and promising to leave Northern Belgium alone unless interfered with, had clarified the issue by a wholesale invasion on the Schlieffen plan. To reach a quick decision they had in fact committed their first great blunder.

General de Lisle called the officers of the 2nd Cavalry Brigade together at Tidworth for a discussion of the situation. I was invited to give a résumé of the position and its probabilities. Liège, I said, could hold out for a fortnight or until heavy howitzers could be brought up for the attack. This proved to be right. The place fell to the Skoda 17-inch howitzers presented to the Emperor by the Austrian Government. It was defended heroically by General Léman who was carried out unconscious after the siege. Lüdendorf, then a Colonel, played a conspicuous part in the attack. My forecast for Namur was less happy. I gave it ten days and it fell in two, defended without determination. The French entrenched camp of Maubeuge, which I had once visited with Henry Wilson, and which he described as a "waspish place," I said would cover our concentration and hold out for at least a fortnight. But this proved equally ineffective. When asked by the Brigadier how long the war would go on, I said I had not the faintest idea, but speaking at random would give it six months. I understood that there were financial reasons why the Great Powers could not continue for long. I had had this from the Prime Minister who told me that Lord Haldane had told him so. So much for prophecy.

De Lisle, however, in an able summing up used these words: "Make no mistake, gentlemen, we are in for a long and bitter war." He was the only person I heard of to make this statement at the time, except Lord Kitchener, though others claimed it afterwards, perhaps "*dans l'esprit d'escalier*."

We mobilized a fine body of men and horses. One of the former deserves mention. He was an old Imperial Light Horseman, Harry Savory, and I had to stretch a

point to enlist him as under thirty, as he must have been fifteen years older. He was an immense size, beyond all regimental clothing, and his chest was a blaze of ribbons from every war in Africa. He was a well-known scout and frontiersman and in our inexperienced ranks did excellent patrol work until wounded in the leg at the Marne when he miraculously escaped, the survivor of his patrol, on a Prussian officer's horse. He would not go to hospital but came along with the squadron in the mess-cart, helping the officers' cook. Then when we were forcing the crossing of the Aisne at Bourg he mounted a horse to join in the fight, but was shot through the head by a sniper from a church tower.

Our horses were excellent, the reserve coming from registered sources, which were mostly hunt stables. I, myself, secured as first charger one Umslopogaas, a powerful weight-carrying hunter with a wall-eye, who could jump railway gates. He was killed early at Andregnies.

We crossed to Boulogne on the 9th of a really hot August. Having a whole Sunday to kill there before we could entrain for the front we took the regiment down to Hardelot and bathed men and horses. Returning from the sea we were surprised to find two French batteries of $\cdot 75$ s in action against us in the sandhills flanked by their sweating and blowing teams. The Commandant told us that we had been reported as a hostile landing.

We detrained at Hautmont and marched north in triumphal procession, roses all the way, fêted and cheered by the unfortunate inhabitants who were so soon to see our backs in full retreat and themselves abandoned. The weather was so perfect and the country looked so peaceful and prosperous that it was difficult to imagine that we

were not merely taking part in some new form of international autumn manœuvres. Harvesting operations had been interrupted by the order to mobilize and although the crops were mostly cut the stooks were still standing in the fields. One looked on the harvest as wasted, but in some miraculous way it was gathered and this miracle was repeated in France and Belgium each year of the war. One old woman, working from dawn to dark, seemed capable of carrying a whole field of wheat.

The first clash with the Germans occurred early on the 22nd August, and as this was for our army the first blow of a long struggle, it deserves some description. My squadron, "C", was pushed forward on the afternoon of the 21st to try to get contact with the enemy. We halted in a little village and sent forward patrols to get information. This all pointed to the Germans streaming south on every road from Brussels, and one retired Belgian officer, visited in his château, estimated them at 450,000, but still no enemy were seen and fugitives reported them bivouacked for the night fifteen miles to the north. We made ourselves comfortable in a field outside our hamlet, keeping standing patrols out on all approaches and continuing to reconnoitre. But I soon took a dislike to our village. Too many young men had been seen leaving it on bicycles for the north, so after dark I moved across the main Brussels road into a wood on a hill that I had noted. From this point I hoped to ambush the enemy's advanced guard and get some prisoners. But when daylight came and the country was still bare I decided to move up the main road until we found the enemy. We had just finished watering our horses at a cross-road when the first Uhlan scouts were sighted, four men riding down the main road. We were

hidden from view and I dismounted two troops for fire action and kept two mounted ready to charge. But 300 yards away the Uhlans saw something suspicious, halted and turned back along the road. In answer to his urgent entreaty I loosed Hornby with two troops down the road after them and mounting the rest followed at a trot.

The Uhlans, a squadron, took to their heels and the chase went merrily down the hard high road, fortunately a very wide one for about a mile and a half. We caught them up in the village of Soignies where there was a regular *mêlée*. The Uhlans were hampered by their long lances and a good many threw them away. Several were killed, Hornby for one running his man through.

The skirmish was over by the time I arrived and the Uhlans, joined by two troops of Hussars which had arrived by a by-road, were again in flight pursued by the relentless Hornby. But soon, on mounting a hill, the chase was brought to an end by sharp rifle fire from a battalion of cyclists in position on the crest. A convenient château with a walled garden gave us cover and a fire position, and I now withdrew Hornby's two troops and sent a message back to say what had occurred, suggesting that a flanking movement by fresh squadrons, while we held up the head of the German column, might be productive of good results. But other plans had already been made and the whole of the cavalry were now to move across to the left flank for the Battle of Mons. No doubt the German advanced guard had had a shake-up for we withdrew unmolested.

This was the first action of the British Expeditionary Force and one of the very few occasions when the *arme blanche* was used during the war. The actual casualties inflicted were few, but the moral effect on both sides

was great. We did not quite know what would happen when we got up against the German cavalry of which there were great masses all trained to shock action. But Hornby had solved the problem for us, and when Uhlan prisoners, captured Prussian horses and a stack of lances in a buggy were brought in by the Squadron Sergeant-major past the whole cavalry division, there was no further doubt and "C" Squadron was greeted with a well-deserved cheer on its return. Hornby was awarded the D.S.O. for this first brush with the Germans, the Brigadier having announced that the first officer to kill a German with the new pattern cavalry sword would be recommended for this honour.

Sir John French in his dispatch of 7th September, 1914, wrote it was not until 5 p.m. on 23rd August that he was informed by General Joffre that he was threatened by at least four German Army Corps. But my reports must have been in his hands by the early afternoon of the 22nd pointing to much the same conclusion. I have sometimes wondered why he should not have believed and acted on the information obtained by his cavalry.

To the regimental officer Mons, like Inkerman, had all the appearance of a good soldier's battle. We held up the Germans and inflicted heavy punishment on them. They even mistook the well-aimed rapid fire of our infantry for unexpected machine-guns. We were prepared to advance and drive them back. But we did not know that our strategic position was a false one, that von Kluck was outflanking us to the north and that the French were retiring on our right, that we had indeed been out-generalled. The orders to retire from this position were received with dismay, and I well remember our feelings of exasperation at this first sign of retreat. We were, alas, to get only too used to it, for well as our

men marched, the French always seemed to march a little further. No sooner had the infantry reached a good position and disposed themselves to dig in and eat their dinner and if necessary fight with their native obstinacy than they were hurried on by Staff Officers crying, "Faster! Faster!" like the Red Queen in *Alice in Wonderland*. And when at length, at Guise, General Lanrezac was bullied by Joffre and Poincaré into standing to fight, Sir John had lost confidence in the French and his one idea was to extricate his army from the German pincers and to get back far enough to reform and refit, to the sea if necessary. Only the final intervention of Lord Kitchener in his Field-Marshal's uniform on behalf of the British Government, restored a semblance of co-ordination to the Allied action. But those early events had a long-lasting psychological effect on the two armies, for the British regarded the French as untrustworthy and the French classed us as unwilling to fight.

So the French fought the Battle of Guise where Franchet d'Esperey's 1st Corps charged with colours flying and bugles blowing and defeated three German Corps with no assistance from us, although they had been given to expect it, and they were then in their turn left in the air.

The sudden death of General Sir James Grierson in the train on his way to the front had deprived us of a capable commander who thoroughly understood the German Army. He had been Chief of Staff to Lord Roberts in South Africa and Military Attaché in Berlin. He was a good linguist and a *bon viveur* who could hold his own in any company. The most be-medalled officer in the Army, he would jokingly admit that the collection on his ample chest commemorated many a hard-fought battle with the knife and fork. I think he had vision, for at a

conference after manœuvres in England, when aeroplanes were in their infancy, I heard him say to King George: "I think, Sir, that these aeroplanes are going to spoil war. When they come over I can only tell my men to cover their heads with hay and make a noise like a mushroom!" Sir John French asked for Sir H. Plumer to fill his place, but Sir H. Smith-Dorrien was sent out, a good fighting soldier but a man with whom French had never seen eye to eye. Both men were self-opinionated. This led to discord in the command. Neither Smith-Dorrien nor Douglas Haig, the two Corps commanders, seem to have had confidence in their chief, and each apparently acted on his own initiative rather than on the orders he received, though their reasons for this were no doubt excellent.

Thus Le Cateau was fought as an isolated action and without the support of the 1st Corps, which withdrew to the south-east, leaving a gap of eight miles between the two corps which was eventually filled by the French. The losses of the 3rd and 5th Divisions in this engagement and the subsequent hurried retreat were staggering, 14,000 officers and men and 80 guns. The 2nd Corps managed to escape the German clutches but the damage to its *moral* was great and in some cases lasting. Only soldiers know how long it takes units to efface the memory of such demoralization and to regain their full fighting value. This retreat, by forced marches, was the hardest task the army could have been called upon to perform, and the battle losses were greatly aggravated by sore feet, that nightmare of the company commander, for the numerous reservists in the line regiments had not yet had time to get used to their boots.

The Cavalry Division under Allenby, consisting of four

brigades with a total of twelve regiments and nine batteries of Horse Artillery, was a fine and well-mounted command, and its fighting value was probably much greater than that of any force of its size in the Allied or enemy armies. It was well trained not only to shock but to fire tactics (the results of long experience in colonial warfare) and while our horse-mastership was good, that of the Germans was inferior and that of the French (who like James Pigg, never got off) was bad. The British cavalryman walked nearly as much as he rode, with the consequence that his horse whom he regarded as a friend and comrade kept condition remarkably well.

The morning of 24th August found Allenby with his whole force trailing his coat to bring on a fight with the cavalry corps of von Marwitz, which was known to be in the vicinity. But either by accident or design von Marwitz avoided us, and at noon the 2nd Brigade was quietly watering in the village of Andregnies. Our reconnaissance must have been at fault for the German infantry was at that very moment steadily advancing on this village and almost within rifle shot of it. At the first alarm, we were ordered to clear out the enemy from round the village. Full of the spirit of the *arme blanche* and imagining that it was a matter of chasing away cavalry patrols, I debouched at the head of my squadron from the northern entrance of the village at a gallop, drawing swords as we went and dashing up a lane between wire fences on to a rise where there was a solitary cottage which seemed a likely *point d'appui*. But as we topped the rise we came under heavy rifle fire and Umslopogaas fell down on his nose with a broken leg, and most of the squadron and machine-gun section seemed to gallop over me, and I received a heavy blow in the face. I saw them

swinging off to the right and then lost consciousness for a time.

I recovered to find myself inside the cottage which held one or two Red Cross orderlies and some wounded, whose rifles had been piled in a corner. There was also an old Frenchman and his wife who had put up the shutters, for bullets were pattering against the walls. Stiff and sore, I got a man to help me on to a chair where I could see through the fanlight over the door. I could scarcely believe my eyes. Marching through the corn in open order and perfect formation, with fixed bayonets glinting in the sun, were line upon line of grey-green German infantry. The nearest could not have been 200 yards away. This sight galvanized me into action, and the back door being barricaded, I went through the open window like the clown in a pantomime. My guardian angel (or was it Shoeing-smith Corporal Old who had tried to shake me into consciousness?) provided a dejected chestnut horse bleeding from a wound in the neck which stood in the gooseberry-bushes and I crawled on to his back and we ambled off in the direction of the village, sole target it seemed for a whole German army corps until we reached dead ground and the cover of the houses.

Just outside the village at the side of the lane were a couple of guns in action, firing away at the advancing German hordes as steadily as if they had been on the range at Okehampton. I think they were captured, but they must first have taken heavy toll of the Germans.

The road rose sharply to a hillock on the south side of the village and my good chestnut was quite done by the time we reached the top. Here I had to shoot him and sat down by the roadside to await developments. The village seemed quite deserted of troops but I could see

our cavalry rallying on a neighbouring hill, a mile away, and before long Francis Grenfell came by at the head of the remains of his squadron of the 9th Lancers, with a bleeding hand tied up in a bandana handkerchief and bullet-holes through his clothes but very exhilarated. They had just saved some guns from capture on the railway line, for which he was afterwards awarded the V.C. He said some of my men who had joined him, were following. I found the blow in the face had deprived me of the power of speech, but I indicated to Francis that having no horse I would wait where I was and he rode on. However, no more troops came up the road and I soon began to realize that the next arrivals would be the grey-greens. I was just thinking what I would give for a Rolls-Royce when a blue and silver sports model rolled over the hill and drew up beside me. My guardian angel was still working. Sadlier-Jackson of the Cavalry signals, looking out for stragglers. He picked me up and after a dash into the village to assure ourselves that the Germans were really in possession, we whisked round and followed the retreat landing up at a big farm where I was deposited at a dressing-station and overhauled and pronounced whole, except for a splintered cheek-bone and slight concussion. I was given a hot drink and put to bed on the straw in the *grenier* by two old ladies who seemed to be the sole remaining natives.

I woke in the night to the clatter of horses, and on looking out of the window saw four Uhlans below me in the moonlight questioning the *patronne*. There was nothing to be done about it, so I went back to bed and slept till daylight. Everyone had evidently gone and forgotten about me. However, in the morning I could move better, and getting a stout stick took leave of my

hostesses and set off for the main road, keeping a sharp look-out front and rear. I had not gone very far before I fell in with a party of our own cavalry headed by Hubert Gough, who had me hoisted on to his spare horse Great-heart. Finally I landed in a car with the Assistant Quartermaster-General, Hambro, who was engaged in the Sisyphean task of directing the cavalry baggage to its various retiring units.

If my guardian angel deserved a medal that day for arranging for my safety on three occasions he should also be awarded a clasp for looking after my wife. She was then working in the Allied Hospital at Brussels, and hearing from the American Legation that I had been listed as "wounded and missing," she set out for Mons in an ambulance flying the Turkish flag, and accompanied by a Turk with supplies for the hospital there. She had the laudable idea of finding me somewhere, but was disappointed. She drove from Brussels to Mons and back through the marching German troops. She afterwards had a narrow escape of remaining in enemy hands as the hospital at Brussels was taken over by the Germans. But she eventually managed to escape by driving in a market-cart to Ostend, and getting on to the last boat to leave for England.

After two days of road work I struck some of my own squadron still separated from the regiment, and feeling much better, got on a horse. The cavalry had got badly split up but was still efficiently performing its functions of rear-guard. The 4th Dragoon Guards had lost eighty-one officers and men in the scrap at Andregnies as well as some of its confidence in the higher leadership. There was a good deal of controversy over this action which was so costly in men and horses and seemed to have achieved

nothing. But General de Lisle received and published in orders a letter of thanks from General Fergusson commanding the 5th Division for his timely assistance to the hard-pressed infantry, without which they would inevitably have been surrounded.

I now collected all the stragglers I could find and for a time had a miscellaneous commando of about a hundred and fifty horse composed chiefly of the 5th Lancers and 4th Dragoon Guards (two Irish regiments). Eventually we regained our regiment and brigade and took part in several orthodox rear-guard actions.

Approaching St. Quentin, the situation of the infantry became precarious. Marched literally off their feet, they straggled into the town in a demoralized condition. In the early afternoon our Brigadier had called the officers together and said we were in a very tight corner, but must fight it out and die like gentlemen. He appointed me rear-guard commander with two squadrons and two companies of French Territorial infantry in support. My orders were to hold the Germans off and retire through St. Quentin at 6 p.m. (I was not actually clear of it until six hours later). I made my dispositions and pushed out patrols to keep touch with the enemy. One of these, a corporal and three men, got cut off and joined a French cavalry regiment but eventually found their way back to us a fortnight later.

The Germans were slow in coming on. During the afternoon a large grey car loaded with ladies came up on to a hill near by and had a good look round. The car was so like a Staff Benz that we thought the sex of the ladies doubtful. We sent a patrol to investigate, but it quickly turned and was gone. The Frenchmen were dug in on a rise north of the town, a nice position, with a

clear field of fire. I arranged with the commandant that he should stay there till 4 p.m., but after visiting the outposts and returning about 2 p.m. there was not a pair of red trousers in sight anywhere. This was my first experience of Allied co-operation. The French, in spite of their gallantry and inherent military qualities, were often unreliable and unpunctual. It may be that their methods were different from ours. They came and went like autumn leaves. Where we would hold a position they would abandon it and retake it with a brilliant counter-attack and *l'heure militaire*, inexorable for *le déjeuner*, seemed meaningless in operations. One had to remember that Marianne was a woman and would keep you guessing. Heroic in danger, she would run from a mouse. She would rise to the heights and descend to the depths. Like the prophet Habbacuc, she was *capable de tout*.

Our interpreter officer, Harrison (4th Hussars), went into St. Quentin to find out if the infantry were clear, as barring an occasional solitary lame duck, they seemed to have ceased coming down the le Cateau road, a part of which we could see. On his return, he reported the place swarming with stragglers, he could find no officers and the men were going into the houses and lying down to sleep. I then dispatched Sewell,¹ with some hefty henchmen, farriers and the like to clear out the houses and get everyone into the market place. He was also to find the Maire and commandeer bread and cheese and beer for our men, who were now on short commons, and to have it put down ready by portions on the pavement outside the Mairie, so that if we were pressed, as seemed quite possible, we should not have to waste time issuing rations.

¹ Brigadier-General Sewell.

We gradually fell back into the town leaving two troops and machine-guns to hold the bridge over the river. There were two or three hundred men lying about in the Place and the few officers with them, try as they would, could not get a kick out of them. Worse, Harrison now reported that the remains of two battalions had piled arms in the railway station and that their commanding officers had given a written assurance to the Maire that they would surrender and fight no more, in order to save the town from bombardment. I had to relieve the Maire of this document at once, and sent Harrison back to tell the two commanding officers that there was a cavalry rear-guard still behind them and they must hurry up and get out. Apparently a meeting was then held, and the men refused to march on the ground that they had already surrendered and would only come away if a train was sent to take them. I therefore sent an ultimatum giving them half an hour's grace, during which time some carts would be provided for those who really could not walk, but letting them know that I would leave no British soldier alive in St. Quentin. Upon this they emerged from the station and gave no more trouble. I quote this unpleasant incident to show to what extremes good troops will be driven by fatigue. I conducted these negotiations through an intermediary, as I knew one of the colonels well and had met the other, and they were, of course, both senior to me.

The men in the square were a different problem and so jaded it was pathetic to see them. If one only had a band, I thought! Why not? There was a toy-shop handy which provided my trumpeter and myself with a tin whistle and a drum and we marched round and round the fountain where the men were lying like the dead playing

the British Grenadiers and Tipperary and beating the drum like mad. They sat up and began to laugh and even cheer. I stopped playing and made them a short exhortation and told them I was going to take them back to their regiments. They began to stand up and fall in, and eventually we moved slowly off into the night to the music of our improvised band, now reinforced with a couple of mouth organs. When well clear of the town I tried to delegate my functions to someone else, but the infantry would not let me go. "Don't leave us, Major," they cried, "or by God we'll not get anywhere." So on we went, and it was early morning before I got back to my squadron. Our rear-guard was unmolested by the Germans and it looked as if "more haste, less speed" might well have been the description of this part of the retreat.

Both the colonels above-mentioned were afterwards court-martialled and cashiered. One of them, Elkington, joined the French Foreign Legion and worked his way to a commission. He was badly wounded and received the Legion of Honour. For his gallantry in the field the King reinstated him in the Army and awarded him the D.S.O.

The night of the anniversary of Sedan found us riding through the Forest of Compiègne in the white moonlight with drawn swords ready to fall upon our enemy, whom we were informed (quite inaccurately) had now surrounded us. There is no doubt, however, that the Germans were making strenuous efforts to round up the British. Hate was the motif of the hour. The Kaiser was annoyed, and on 19th August had issued the famous order which heads this chapter.

The word "contemptible" tickled the queer sense of humour of the British soldier and was a valuable slogan for the first seven divisions, and no doubt gave impetus

to recruiting, but this translation of the word is hardly a fair one. "Insignificant" would probably meet the case.

Although we found a fleet of supply wagons in the wood with engines still running, and other queer things, including German soldiers in grey-green cut in half at the waist—I never knew how (was it an illusion caused by the ground mist or did I dream it? For I rode in a trance)—we emerged into the open without further contact.

It was a relief to halt at last within the defences of Paris for even the most unimaginative were by that time wondering when and where the chase would end. On the doctor's advice I got leave and borrowed a car to go into Paris and see a specialist about my face. Paris was a dead city, the shutters were up, the streets entrenched, and the Government gone to Bordeaux. The specialist had a German name. He rubbed his hands and beamed on me. Our army had had a bad time, yes? The Germans were supermen—Paris would now surrender to them? and so on. The Battle of the Marne already preparing must have come as a shock to him. Time, he said, would heal my cheek-bone.

CHAPTER V

BATTLE OF THE MARNE

"And the English went forward through the wood that is called Crecy, and stamped it with their seal for the second time, in the highest moment of all the secular history of man."—*The Crimes of England*, G. K. Chesterton.

CHAPTER V

I RETURNED to the regiment the same evening to find a welcome change of atmosphere. The Great Turn Round! We were actually to advance and fight! Feverish reorganization and thinning out of our baggage to save transport. The tired and demoralized infantry were transformed, and like Moore's troops at Corunna, were already preparing to avenge the humiliations of the Great Retreat.

We got contact with the Germans on 6th September. My squadron was advanced guard and from the village of Peçy which was on a hill, we were able to see their infantry halted on the road. A Uhlan patrol which reconnoitred us was hotly dealt with. I sent back a frantic appeal for guns. A German battery barked at us and set fire to a house. Then the phenomenon occurred. Under our eyes the enemy column began to wheel round in the road and retire to the north. It was the peak of Von Klück's advance. I saw an aeroplane being towed along the road turn round to be towed home. It looked incomprehensible, but we knew nothing at that time of the new 6th French Army which had rapidly formed to the west, or of Maud'huy and Gallieni and all the taxi-cabs of Paris which were rushing troops up to attack the German right flank. Our guns for once missed a grand target and we could only follow up the German rear-guard cursing and impotently sniping at them. The pursuit was feeling its way.

That night we halted and were out of touch in the

morning, but regained it later, and this day witnessed a frontal charge by a handful of the 9th Lancers, led by their Colonel, David Campbell, against a largely superior force of the 1st Garde-Drager. This must have been almost as exciting for him as riding the "Soarer" to victory in the Grand National. David and his adjutant, Reynolds, both received lance wounds. The 18th Hussars dismounting nimbly in the edge of a wood severely punished the rest of the regiment and the fields were strewn with dead horses. All this time, close on our left, could be heard the *rafale* of the Battle of the Marne.

Our pursuit could not be called vigorous, but then we were still a somewhat jaded army. The crossing of every river, however, provided the excitement of a fight and when we came to the little Morin, Jones,¹ attached to my squadron, was ordered to gallop the bridge by the Brigadier, who had been ahead reconnoitring, but found a cart drawn across it lined with Jagers who received him with a volley. Luckily his casualties were confined to horseflesh.

The Germans put up a stiff resistance on the Aisne, a sluggish but wide and unfordable stream with wooded banks and steep slopes on either side. We captured the two bridges at Bourg with the loss of only one officer and four men in my squadron. These included Pat Fitzgerald, the machine-gun officer who had been romantically married at Tidworth during mobilization. He was in action on the bridge, lying close to me and was, I think, sniped from the church tower and shot through the head. The same fate overtook my old friend, Harry Savory, who in spite of his wound had exchanged the mess cart for a horse and was riding up to join the fight. Having

¹ 13th Hussars.

half an hour's halt to water and feed horses we buried them and two other good men and true, in the little churchyard at Bourg, with the aid of sympathetic and rejoicing villagers.

That night we spent in the Château of Soupir, which belonged to Gaston Calmette, proprietor of the *Figaro*. He had recently been murdered by Madame Caillaux, who was defended in Court by Maître Labori, and the butler regaled me with the thrilling story of this *cause célèbre et crime passionnel* over a good dinner and some excellent burgundy. An agreeable relaxation after a hard day, but the evening was marred by the death of a friend, Percy Wyndham, close by, and the opening of heavy howitzer fire on our comfortable billet later in the night. The arrival of these "coal-boxes" made it evident that the "pursuit" was at an end and that the Germans were making a stand on the Chemin-des-Dames. Our infantry now took the front place and fought an indeterminate and drawn-out action known as the Battle of the Aisne.

The cavalry withdrew to more distant billets and came up every morning at daylight in support. I remember we were rather *naïve* in those days, and Allenby held his divisional church parade on the forward slope of a nice green hill (not "far away" enough) in full view of an enemy observation balloon. Probably the sight was so unusual that the matter had to be referred to higher command and the service was well under way before the German "crumps" began to arrive. They straddled us nicely, and one came unpleasantly close as the Chaplain intoned "give peace in our time, oh Lord." There was a hurried consultation, but "the Bull" was standing with his legs well apart and his big chin stuck out, and I knew he was putting his trust in God. However, to most people's

relief the service was speeded up and the parade dismissed before any damage was done.

Our billets were a long way from the hill at Paissy, our day station and the daily ride to and fro and the long wait with nothing to do became monotonous. Someone (I think MacGillicuddy of the Reeks—he looked the part) brought along a volume of Handley Cross and we whiled away the time examining the subalterns on the doings and sayings of Jorrock. Sometimes a stray shell or spent bullet would hit someone. One strange casualty we had of a man on whom we could not find a mark. A spent bullet had come over the hill and gone into his open mouth. "Serve him right," said his troop-sergeant, "you know what the Major always says!" (What the Major said was, if you see a man with his mouth open in a *mêlée* pick him out and go for him.) One day we found a wounded Turko on the hill whose movements were handicapped by what appeared to be a mango-wurzel inside his baggy trousers, but which turned out on investigation to be a German's head.

Our daily pilgrimage to the hill at Paissy was at length justified, for one afternoon the infantry on our right were driven from the Chemin-des-Dames, that now famous and blood-drenched road which ran east and west along the crest of the hill overlooking the Aisne. My squadron happened to be ready first and we had a smart gallop of a mile and a half to get to the scarp where the infantry had taken shelter. I got on ahead and jumping off my horse, told my trumpeter to wait for the squadron and tell Hornby to dismount and look out for my signals. I ran on up to the crown of the hill which was bare stubble, and seemed quite deserted until I saw a German officer's helmeted head coming up the other side. I saw him

wave to his men, and I did the same to mine, giving the signal to "double." We met the "picklehaubers" almost face to face and standing up poured rapid fire into them which put them to flight. A second squadron came up on our right and we occupied some shallow rifle-pits previously dug by the infantry. I then sent back and got the infantry to come along and all together, supported by an advancing battalion of Algerian Tirailleurs in their blue and silver jackets and red trousers on our right, we swept on and retook the Chemin-des-Dames position, which the Germans hastily evacuated, not unnaturally, as the trenches, such as they were, faced the wrong way for them. Here we left the infantry in position and went back into support. The Brigadier came up to congratulate the squadron and afterwards wrote a very complimentary letter. After dark when things had settled down I went across to ask after the commander of the Tirailleurs whom I had seen fall at the head of his men. He had a nasty stomach wound. I was surprised to meet him after the war as Military Governor of Prague and the strong man of the Czechoslovak army. He had left Austria in early life and joined the French Foreign Legion, working, his way up to a commission, and on the outbreak of war commanded the Algerian Tirailleurs.

About this time Hogg, of the 4th Hussars, was killed and command of the regiment was given to me, though I was not to exercise it for long. The "Race for the Sea," consequent on our realization that the Germans, baulked in their "nach Paris" plan meant to out-flank us and grab the Channel ports, had now begun, and after our second day's march north I was sent for to General Headquarters, then at Fère-en-Tardenois. I arrived very late at night, and as the Commander-in-Chief wished to see me per-

sonally, waited till 7.30 next morning, when I saw Sir John in bed. He told me that he had heard the day before that the Belgian Field Army was about to evacuate Antwerp, which would mean the loss of that place and perhaps the Channel ports, which would seriously compromise the position of his army. As I knew the King of the Belgians and the Chief of Staff I was to go there post-haste and use all my influence to keep them there as long as possible. At the same time he was sending Sykes¹ by air to bring back my report, but owing to the uncertainty of our machines doubted his arriving there, at all events in one day. (This doubt was justified.)

I was given a Rolls Royce and a prince of chauffeurs, one Martin, who had the rank of sergeant in the Warwickshire Horse Artillery. Martin (and the Rolls) remained with me throughout my service in France, and he won the D.C.M. and the French Croix-de-guerre.

We set off at once, heading for Lille, but on making inquiries in the outskirts of the town we learnt that the Uhlans had entered the place that morning. So we turned and made for St. Omer and thence to Ostend. Here I went to the Royal Châlet, a villa on the Digue belonging to the King of the Belgians and found the house open and a *maître d'hôtel* who recognized me from Brussels days. So Martin and I sat down to cutlets and a bottle of champagne, while the good man tried to get in touch by telephone with King Albert's household at Antwerp. Before long I was speaking to Countess Ghislaine Caraman-Chimay, an old friend of mine and lady-in-waiting to the Queen. The line was indifferent and she would not believe in my identity, suspecting some German ruse. She told me nothing, but finally she agreed to let the King

¹ Major-General Sir F. H. Sykes.

know what I said and that I would be in Antwerp that night.

By the time we got to Ghent progress was slow for the roads were choked with refugees and we had a long wait in the Grande Place. Here a little Belgian soldier betrayed great interest in ourselves and our car, and we found that he was the chauffeur of a Belgian living in London who had a Rolls-Royce. I said, "All right, jump in and drive us to Antwerp." We had done nearly 500 miles, a long drive in those days, and were both dog-tired.

We woke up in Antwerp about 10 p.m. and stopped at the temporary British Legation where Sir Francis Villiers our Minister, and Fairholm, the Military Attaché, were still functioning. I was too tired to answer their many questions, requiring all my concentration for an interview with the King, for which I had asked immediately on arrival. The King had already turned in, but received me in his bedroom with Generals Jungbluth and Hanoteaux. I put forward Sir John's proposals which indicated an early concentration of our army about Lille and the possible presence there within four days of an Army Corps and two Cavalry Divisions. I was told that owing to the condition of the Belgian troops the position was critical, and if Antwerp were to be saved it must be by an offensive movement of a much more direct nature. The King, who was very calm and determined, said that he could not risk a Sedan but would remain (as he had already told Sir Francis Villiers) for four more days if we would undertake to hold Ghent to protect his flank. This I promised in the name of the Commander-in-Chief hoping that Rawlinson due to land at Zeebrugge with the 7th Division and 4th Cavalry Division would dispatch a brigade to Ghent. I sent off a telegram via London to

General Headquarters and went to bed in the first hotel I saw. There was a good deal of gun-fire during the night.

Early next morning I got off a report by car to Sir John French, and then made a round of the place, which I knew pretty well of old. I joined Winston Churchill, who in his Trinity House uniform was characteristically making for the sound of the guns. We agreed that determined men could hold the place for ever. But for my part, I was averse to letting a field army get locked up in a fortress. The Belgian forts had proved death-traps. Wavre-Ste-Catherine was one of the few modern forts completed. Its $2\frac{1}{2}$ -metre thick concrete shelters and steel turtle-back cupolas had been pierced and smashed to ruins by the plunging fire of the 42 and 21 cm. howitzers directed by aeroplane observation. This had been a great shock to Belgian *moral*. The trenches were very strong.

The arrival of a Naval Brigade with two more to follow, one of which was of Marines, had considerably raised the spirits of the defence. But I knew that once the Field Army retired, the Belgian fortress troops could put up little resistance against the Big Berthas, those dreaded 42 cm. Skoda howitzers which had reduced Liège and Namur and for defence against which these forts had never been designed.

The naval brigades were moved up to the River Nethe, the best line of resistance in the position. I spent the day about Termonde and Schoonaarde where fighting went on all day. This position was of great importance to secure the flank of a possible retreat on Bruges. It was very strong and the Belgians must have broken badly to have let the Germans through there on the 8th to cut our line of retreat. There was a factory at Schoonaarde of which the whole personnel was said to be Germans who had

been mobilized, and it was here that the Germans threw a bridge and forced the crossing on the 7th. Returning to Antwerp at 4 p.m., I found the Belgians had withdrawn from part of the Nethe line, exposing the flank of the Marines and allowing the Germans to get a footing on the north bank of the Nethe at Lierre. The position was restored by a counter-attack, and at nightfall was satisfactory. A 'plane arrived from General Headquarters to take my report which I sent after seeing the King and his staff in the evening.

During the day I got into touch with Fitzgerald, Lord Kitchener's Military Secretary, at the War Office, by telephone from a cellar. He said that Lord Kitchener was sitting beside him and wanted to know the situation. I gave it to him. He asked if the Belgians could be persuaded to stay longer. I said no, that the King was afraid of being trapped in Antwerp and was determined to go. He then asked how many men would be required to hold the place. I put it at 30,000 good troops, but added that although the inner lines were strongly entrenched the Belgian Fortress Troops were not to be counted on and the German Heavy Siege Train could knock out the forts. We should have to be prepared to supply heavy artillery for counter-battery work, and as the Germans were already attacking, we were likely to be too late and could do better by a counterstroke outside. If Sir John got to Lille as he intended we could fall on the German left with the six or seven Allied divisions shortly available with every prospect of success.

But Sir John never reached Lille, nor could Rawlinson's 7th Division, landing at Zeebrugge, get to Ghent until the 9th, where it eventually gained touch with the promised French reinforcements. But it was then too

late. Antwerp had already fallen and all Rawlinson could hope to do was to safeguard the retreat of the Antwerp garrison. It was strange to be able to talk so easily with the War Office and each evening of the short siege I telephoned a report to Fitzgerald, except one day when I knew that Colonel Seely, who had arrived to do liaison with Sir John French, was doing so. What with the ex-Secretary of State for War and Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, who paid two visits to Antwerp, the Government was well represented if the Army was not.

The night of the 5th-6th produced an unfortunate episode, the Belgians attempting a counter-attack with ill-organized and tired troops. The attack defeated itself and was responsible for further loss of ground and of *moral*. On the 6th portions of the Belgian line fell back from the Nethe, necessitating a general withdrawal to an intermediate position only indifferently prepared. Realizing the lack of stability amongst the Belgians and the inability to manœuvre on the part of the Naval Brigades, General Paris, after consulting General Sir H. Rawlinson and Mr. Churchill, asked the Belgian General Staff to retire to the second line trenches which were extremely strong. This was agreed to and effected by 2 a.m. on the 7th. The British troops were now in a position that suited them, "backs to the wall and fight it out," and would have given a good account of themselves against any attack, had there not been factors undermining the defence, which finally compelled our withdrawal.

On the 6th and 7th the Belgian Field Army with the exception of the 2nd Division, was withdrawn to an entrenched camp on the left bank of the Scheldt. The King's plan was that the Field Army should retain its

power of manœuvre and assist the fortress to resist to the last. He would remain at hand to encourage resistance as long as possible. If well supported by the Allies he would counter-attack. But if the Allies failed him he would have to fall back on Dunkirk and leave the fortress to its fate. He had no illusions as to its powers of resistance. Unfortunately there were two schools of thought in the Belgian General Staff and under orders not authorized by the King the Field Army marched west and allowed the Germans to drive a wedge between it and the city. Its departure sealed the fate of Antwerp.

I spent the 7th organizing with the Belgian Navy ferry accommodation for 7,000 men at two points on the river bank. This consisted of tugs with steam up under a guard of Marines. This precaution was necessary as the Belgians meant to destroy the bridges of the enceinte which would cut our troops off from access to the two pontoon bridges across the Scheldt, and it was expected that the enemy would endeavour to break up the pontoons. Actually most of the Naval Division eventually contrived to reach the Scheldt bridges and were given by the Governor precedence in their use. Three battalions, however, which did not get their orders to retire made use of the ferries; the bridges having by then been destroyed. We did not finish these arrangements until daylight on the 8th.

The German Artillery had now been moved up and during the night subjected the town to a serious bombardment and the population got on the move. The forts were heavily shelled and completely outgunned and fell one by one.

Early on the 9th we had a conference at Belgian Headquarters interrupted by panicky messages from various parts of the line. Colonel Seely and I volunteered to

visit these localities and straighten things out. We visited the two forts in question and found the reports untrue, but it was decided to reinforce the garrisons with two companies of infantry and some machine-guns. I then, at General Paris's request, visited his 2nd Brigade and conveyed his assurances that the situation was unchanged and the line intact. There was at this time fairly heavy fire on the forts, big stuff: I think 15 and 32 or perhaps 42 cm. howitzers on Fort 5, and as I passed some of the garrison began leaving it. The 42's were really rather formidable, for they made a noise like an express train followed by a staggering explosion. The shell weighed a ton and descended almost vertically. The Belgians called it "le Bloc," the nickname of the non-stop Brussels—Antwerp express. One of these forts was reported to contain many killed and wounded. There being an ambulance handy, two Belgian doctors volunteered to accompany me, and we all marched into the fort, but could find no casualties. Most of the garrison, which seemed inadequate in number, being only about 80 strong, were well under cover. The forts were spacious and there was plenty of room for shells to burst. The cupola guns were still in action, but an open battery in rear had been silenced and the gunners had disabled their guns and retired. I promised to ask for reinforcements for the garrison and went back towards the Porte de Malines.

On my way I intercepted an alarming message from one of our battalion commanders to his brigadier, carried by an officer on a bicycle, to the effect that the forts on his flanks (4 and 5) were being "pulverized" and that unless closely supported by infantry and guns he would have to retire. This brought home to me the inexperience of the officers in charge and the dangers of the situation. I wrote

a message to the effect that I had just come from these forts and that all was now well: but that in any case evacuation by the Belgians was not to be considered a sign for retirement as our trenches could sweep with fire all the ground in front of the forts and that all troops must remain in position until they received written orders to withdraw or until turned out at the point of the bayonet. I gave this to the officer to show to his brigadier and any other officers he might meet. Shortly afterwards at the Porte de Malines I met the garrison of Fort 4 retiring. They were with difficulty induced to return to their posts by their officers.

It was obvious to me that a fortress could not be held by such troops, and I drove to the Pilotage, now the headquarters of everyone, and reported to General Paris. I met Colonel Seely who had had similar experiences. He and I drove to the cellar of the main telegraph office, the sole remaining communication with the outer world. Colonel Seely then went back to the trenches where his example of sang-froid under fire was invaluable, leaving me to telephone. I got General Rawlinson, who told me that there was now no hope of a counter-stroke outside the fortress, that he was going to concentrate his division at Ostend and that we must get out as cheaply as we could. I also spoke to Fitzgerald at the War Office, and gave him the situation for Lord Kitchener, who authorized the evacuation of the Naval Division at the most propitious time. This to me meant the same evening, and I went back to the Pilotage to inform General Paris. But having now no car I was some time getting there and found all staffs disappeared, but a Belgian officer told me that orders had been given for a retirement from the outer line at 6 p.m. I commandeered a passing car

and drove to the cross-roads north of Hoboken Station where I knew some of our troops must pass. Here I organized the flight of refugees whose vehicles were blocked three abreast on the road and put out traffic controls to get order and allow only a section at a time to go on to the bridge. I then bicycled to the bridge where I found General Paris with a staff officer waiting for his troops which were very late in arriving.

Here I stayed for some hours helping troops over. It was an extraordinary sight. There were many thousands of refugees all in their Sunday best (the recognized wear of the *évacué*) with vehicles of every description piled with household goods and children, herds of livestock, Belgian stragglers in their coloured uniforms and detachments of our own in good order, the scene lit up by the light of blazing oil-reservoirs. It looked a fair imitation of the Inferno. I then drove to Beveren-Waes, where we hoped to give the troops a rest but an urgent message from General Rawlinson at Zeebrugge decided Paris to push on to the next station, St. Gilles-Waes, where trains were being provided. He asked me to go forward and make arrangements. I took five or six motor buses crammed with men which did stages until the whole of this column arrived and were entrained. The second train being well under way I went on to make supply arrangements at Salzaete. This was successfully carried out by Belgian officers and rations handed to the troops on board the trains.

Towards midday Colonel Dallas, Rawlinson's Chief-of-Staff, telephoned to me from Moerbeke that all troops were reported through and that he was coming on to join me at Salzaete.

But before his arrival I was rung up by Commodore

Henderson from St. Gilles asking for train accommodation for his brigade which had not yet arrived there. I impressed upon him the necessity for all speed as the line was expected to be attacked. He asked if 5.30 p.m. would be too late as he had to feed his men. I said that a train was going back for him immediately and three more would follow, but that there must be no delay and if necessary troops must go hungry to Ostend. The station-master, who worked like a Trojan, sent the train off at once and arranged the departure of three more, which were all in the vicinity.

Towards 2 p.m. St. Gilles announced the departure of one train and the second to be almost ready. Communication was then interrupted and Colonel Dallas who had now arrived and I, after waiting some time, went to see General Dossin commanding the 2nd Belgian Division, which had been allotted to the defence of Antwerp and whose troops were then marching through Salzaete. On the way I met a friend, Major Kerkhove of the Guides, who said that he had had a fight with the advancing Germans at Moerbeke where they had shelled the village and inflicted considerable loss. General Dossin's rear-guard had been engaged but had extricated itself by turning north and following a road that led along the Dutch frontier. He could not delay his march to help us without reference to Army Headquarters, but sent out patrols and a small reconnaissance in the required direction. Information from fugitives said that two hundred British had been captured in a train at Moerbeke. One more train came through at 9 p.m. with two hundred men, and on returning to Salzaete early on the 10th I found the station-master had entrained about the same number at 7 a.m., who had arrived there on foot. A final train

which brought a few of our men from St. Nicholas, was driven by a Belgian officer under heavy fire, the driver having deserted. This officer, Lieutenant De Reyck, behaved most gallantly and I brought his conduct to notice, as also that of several Belgian officials who behaved with devotion. There was indeed no lack of individual heroism amongst the Belgians, but the Army had been outclassed and severely handled by the Germans who had not unnaturally acquired a moral ascendancy.

Hearing rumours of more British stragglers I went back down the road to Moerbeke in a car and met an officer of the Naval Division who said he had about forty very tired men some six kilometres in rear. My chauffeur meanwhile had found a motor-bus with petrol in it and a Belgian driver and went back with the car and bus and brought the whole party safely in. They were Captain Grant's detachment who had refused to cross the Dutch frontier. I then got definite information that the remainder of the 1st Naval Brigade had marched into Holland and surrendered to the Dutch near La Clinge. As we could find no more stragglers I telephoned the situation to General Rawlinson and came on to Ostend.

I give the above details as set down in my report written at the time to show what confusion can occur in an impromptu campaign with no definite plan carried out by an improvised force under divided command. I seemed to be continually doing someone else's work, though it is only fair to state that the dislocation of the arrangements for the withdrawal of the Naval Division was due to the absence of its Chief of Staff who had been kicked by a horse and disabled. There were about a thousand men missing, two hundred of whom seem to have been captured by the Germans and the rest interned in Holland.

Of the Belgian Fortress Troops about 20,000 fled into Holland and most of the remainder made their way along the Dutch frontier to Ostend.

Having reported at Ostend I was glad of a sleep, not having seen a bed for days. In fact the last I could remember was early in the siege in a very modern hotel with an enormous shell-hole in the wall of my room and masses of dark-red roses left by Princess Goudachieff who had vacated it the day before.

It had been arranged that the King should accompany his Government to the Havre, but this devoted ruler declined to leave the Army and after a short rest at Ostend took his troops back behind the Yser River at Nieuport.

So Antwerp, the great rich city, the fat prize, fell into the grasp of the enemy and became "a pistol pointing at the breast of England." She might have held out longer if defended with determination. There were a dozen forts and ten redoubts in the front line still intact and the old second-line forts had plenty of good cover. The intermediate trenches were strong and well sited. But the Belgian fortress troops were inferior. They were indeed intimidated out of the place, and most of the garrisons of the second-line forts retired before they were attacked. Twenty-four hours later the last field troops left, though there was plenty of ammunition not a shot was fired and General de Guise capitulated on the 10th.

It was rather remarkable how the fortified places designed to delay the enemy indefinitely, fell without striking a blow; Namur, Maubeuge, Antwerp were all surrendered in a lamentable manner. Only Liège thanks to the stout heart of its Commander played its proper rôle for a fortnight. King Albert showed his wisdom and

knowledge of history in refusing to run the risk of allowing his Field Army to become involved in a siege.

It soon became the fashion to blame Churchill for the whole Antwerp incident, but the facts speak for themselves. There were no Army troops available and the arrival of the men of the Naval Division, raw as they were (except for the Marines) put great heart into the Belgians, who had fought on their own for two months and who up to then had scarcely seen an Allied soldier, and encouraged them to hold out for at least four more days. That those few days were priceless I had from the lips of Lord Kitchener who said that they saved Dunkirk and Calais for us, and possibly Boulogne.

Arrived at Ostend, Rawlinson appointed me his intelligence officer until such time as I could rejoin my own regiment. We marched down to Ypres with little molestation and the British soldier called it "Wipers" from the first as he had in Marlborough's day. In the Grand Place of that still unravished city, a Taube flew over us and was brought down by the rifle fire of the 4th Cavalry Brigade. I examined the occupants who were unhurt, but they would give us no information.

Sir John French having now moved up to St. Omer I went in and reported. Very anxious for his left flank and the Channel ports, and uncertain of the ability of the Belgians to hold on, he now decided to get and to keep close touch with them.

CHAPTER VI

THE BATTLE OF THE YSER

Ton pauvre coin de sol ou demeure debout,
Face à l'orage, un roi, avec sa foi armée,
Tu le peuples encor de canons et d'armées
Pour le tenir tragiquement, jusques au bout.

Emile Verhaeren.

CHAPTER VI

ON 15th October Prince Arthur of Connaught was dispatched to Furnes, now the Headquarters of the Belgian Army, accompanied by myself to make known to the King that the British Army would shortly come into line on his right and that it was highly desirable to hold the line of the Yser as long as possible. I was to remain with the Belgian Headquarters with Major C. B. Thomson¹ and do liaison work.

My staff was soon strengthened by the arrival of Lord Athlone from the Blues, Colonel Tyrrell, an artillery expert, John Baird,² from the Scottish Horse, and Lieutenant Shoppee, who with a Yeoman of Signals, was landed by night on Nieuport pier under the nose of the enemy from a destroyer directed by the lights of my car. The young Duke of Sutherland, whose mother was establishing her hospital at Dunkirk, also joined us.

The strength of the Belgian Army at this time was 50,000 infantry, 5,000 cavalry and 300 guns. Cavalry and artillery were in a good state, but the *moral* of the infantry had suffered much from continual retirements culminating in the retreat from Antwerp, since which they had scarcely had a day's rest. There was a prevailing idea in the Army that it should be withdrawn as soon as possible behind the shelter of the French or British lines to rest and refit and certain preparations to this end had already been made.

¹ Afterwards Lord Thomson, killed in the R.101.

² Afterwards Lord Stonehaven.

The idea of a stubborn resistance on the Yser was unpopular, and it was soon evident that if the Belgians were to hang on they would want a lot of outside help. Promises of speedy support from the French and the appearance of British warships and an armoured train encouraged the defence. The King visited all his troops and had it made known that any officers who abandoned their positions would be at once removed from their command. A brigade of French Fusiliers Marins was thrown into Dixmude south of which the Belgian cavalry and French territorials continued the line. We had the advantage of a safe left flank on the sea and a river line to defend. Nieuport at the mouth of the Yser boasted a solid old thirteenth-century brick erection, La Tour des Templiers, from which a wide view of the front right up to Ostend could be obtained. Here we established an artillery observation post for the fleet to La Panne, our eventual headquarters, whence we had with telephone back lamp communication with the ships.

On the 17th, German attacks began to develop against Lombartzyde, Nieuport, St. Georges and Dixmude. These places were indeed the scene of heavy fighting throughout the ten-day battle, and all except Nieuport changed hands. The identification of two German corps and an *Ersatz* division as well as the arrival of marines and heavy artillery at Ostend from Antwerp and the presence of captive observation balloons and a pontoon train confirmed our views that the Germans meant to push the Belgians back on Dunkirk.

On the 19th, "by request," the Belgians made a demonstration to assist the offensive of the British 7th Division on Menin and the French towards Roulers, but the failure

of these two operations entailed the subsequent retirement of the Belgians with considerable loss.

The Germans had selected as their first crossing St. Georges from which the Belgians were driven after destroying the bridge. In their effort to gain the right bank of the river, however, the Germans lost heavily, advancing across the open with a battalion in line supported by battalions in column of *Zugs* on each flank.

The Belgians were now to be assisted by the French 42nd Division under a Corsican General, Grossetti, which began to arrive at Furnes on the 20th. The first appearance of good regular troops with a band had a surprising effect on the spirits of the Belgian troops and the populace. So much so that a daily march past in the square was instituted and continued until the 42nd Division had concentrated and left for the front.

There was some difference of opinion between the Belgian and French staffs as to the employment of these troops; the former being anxious for a brigade to reinforce their centre whilst the French contemplated an offensive along the coast. It was not until the Belgian centre had been severely handled and driven in that the French abandoned their plan (for which indeed they were never strong enough) and sent five battalions to reinforce the defensive lines.

On the 22nd, two British monitors came into action with great effect, and the Dover Patrol continued to give us direct support throughout the battle. On this day too the Belgians beat off a strong attack with heavy loss, but had to put their last reserves into line to do so. The Army, which had been invited to hold on until the 20th, still found themselves on the 22nd without substantial support. The weather was abominable and the infantry

were in a very poor shape. Muddy, unshaven, often too tired to march or even shoot, they crowded the wet trenches (water was found only two feet down) in a condition bordering on apathy. It was to these men that all the French commanders, Foch, d'Urbal, Grossetti, preached the doctrines of taking the offensive in and out of season. The King protested, and demanded more direct help from the Allies. Of d'Urbal, singing praise of "l'attaque" as an antidote for all evils, he asked with his dry sense of humour, "How is it then that the Allies are not yet on the Rhine?" recalling the fact that the French and British were advancing no faster than the Belgians. Foch was accompanied on his visit by Lieutenant Interpreter Tardieu, afterwards three times Premier of France. I had my first talk with Foch on this occasion.

At first sight a horsey-looking little man chewing a cigar which he constantly tried to light, and with a little stick that he always carried. He was a model of simplicity, directness and apt criticism, helped out by expressive and frequent gesture. One soon began to feel that fiery spirit within which would never allow that France could possibly be beaten. Foch was the offensive spirit incarnate, but he was also a past-master at the husbanding of reserves as the British Army was to learn to its cost. His greatness was based upon his deep knowledge of the military factors and he was quite unhampered by considerations of vanity or personal ambition. Though full of ginger and the will to conquer he did not, I thought, give due consideration to local conditions on the Yser.

The situation soon became critical owing to the fatigue and demoralization of the Belgians, but tension was relieved by Grossetti, who attacked with five battalions

and retook one of the lost villages with the bayonet. The night of the 24th-25th was quiet, but in the morning it was reported that the whole of the 44th Division of the German XXII Reserve Army Corps had crossed the Yser into a bight which it formed south of Schoorbakke. This was too good an opportunity to be missed, and all available French and Belgian artillery, 120 guns in all, concentrated their fire on this division for five hours, inflicting, according to prisoners' accounts, enormous losses, while the survivors fled over the river at night.

The sea, the ancient enemy of the Low Countries, against which all the hydraulic defences of the land had been directed, was now to be called in as an ally. Inundation was a complicated problem, and for some time the Belgians had declared it impracticable, although Sir John French had from the beginning charged me to urge them to make use of it. There was also a local prejudice against letting the sea back on to good land, so painfully reclaimed and drained. However, preparations were at last made to flood all the country east of the Nieuport-Dixmude railway by means of the sluices at Nieuport, using the railway embankment as a barrage to prevent the flood moving west. The preliminary work of blocking culverts and cutting channels had already been done.

During the night of the 25th-26th, however, the French troops at Lombartzyde who had advanced along the coast as far as Westende were driven in across the river and the sluice gates at Nieuport (the Noordvaart Weir) being now under close fire the Belgian General Staff considered it would be impossible to carry out the scheme. Realizing the importance of the inundations to this tired army, I went to the General Staff and undertook, if necessary, to find British volunteers to do the job.

But the Belgians managed it themselves and it was found possible that night to open the gates for the flood tide and close them against the ebb. The inundations actually began at 5 a.m. on the 28th and as the river was tidal up to Dixmude, the flood aided by heavy rain began slowly to take effect.

Every day there had been alarms and excursions, sudden diversions and desperate expedients, but the 26th November was really critical. That day, the 1st and 2nd Divisions broke badly and retired in large numbers, fugitives reaching as far as Furnes which was Army Headquarters. They were collected and re-formed and with difficulty brought back. Orders were drafted by the General Staff for a general retirement. I had been up in the observation tower at Nieuport, but hurried back to Furnes and made strong representations to the King that we must hang on at all costs to this last corner of Belgium or risk never getting back again on to the map. He was of the same opinion, but very sad and upset about the way his Army was being decimated practically without help in the Allied cause. A few really reliable battalions in the line would make all the difference. He asked me if I would take him to St. Omer that night to see Sir John French, and I arranged by telephone that we should dine at British General Headquarters.

It was already late but the news was better, the Belgians were holding their own, there was no further talk of retreat, and probably there would be no change in the situation during the night. We were an hour late for dinner at St. Omer. The sight of a galaxy (or was it a jealousy?) of generals and staff officers with swords and medals, spotlessly turned out waiting to receive him, reassured the King. These did not look like people who

were going to be driven out of their positions. They were far too comfortable. I was rather dirty, having been in either the Belgian trenches or the Tour des Templiers all day without time to change, and I think the Adjutant-General registered a black mark against me.

We got no reinforcements but had a good dinner and a cigar which King Albert always greatly appreciated, for he said he could not afford good tobacco. We had a talk over the map after dinner. When Sir John explained the desperate nature of the Battle of Ypres and how one of his corps commanders had even to throw his camp guard into the line led by his Chief of Staff, the King realized that it was in no niggardly spirit that he had refused to send men north to help the Belgians. Besides this, Sir John pointed out that the French had assumed guardianship of the Belgian sector and the responsibility was theirs.

Coming back in the car, the King said that he did not think the world realized the effort the isolated Belgian Field Army was making, for the English and French Press, full of the doings of their own armies, never mentioned them. Next day, I spoke by telephone to my good friend, Fitzgerald, at the War Office, and asked him if he could have something put in *The Times*. He asked me what and I dictated the high lights for a complimentary leader which duly appeared and caused great satisfaction amongst the Belgians.

A few shells were flung into Furnes that day and there were indications of panic amongst the inhabitants until the King, whose courage and serenity never faltered, showed himself in the square. The trenches were heavily bombarded on the night of the 28th-29th, but no attack followed. One thousand eight hundred Zouaves arrived and the country began to get boggy. The muddy con-

dition of prisoners was a welcome sign that the waters were beginning to cover the earth.

Our ships were in daily action and this day two shells struck H.M.S. *Falcon*, killing the commander and six men and causing numerous other casualties. Again heavy night bombardment, this time followed by infantry attacks on Ramscapelle and Pervyse at midnight. A German officer's note-book taken contained an order forbidding troops to "overburden" themselves with loot, and noting that General Joffre would in future shoot any prisoners taken with dumdum bullets on them. A letter found on a prisoner was a tribute to the Dover Patrol. The writer found their fire "terrific" and said the "swine give us no peace," adding that the Commanding Officer had been in a cellar for six days. This I can believe, having almost daily watched and directed fire from the Tour des Templiers at Nieuport. The big shells came in from the sea at unexpected intervals in direct enfilade and must at times have caused havoc.

On the 30th the Germans made a determined attack at Ramscapelle, a key village on rising ground and managed to occupy the whole of it by nightfall, the Belgians retiring in a rout for two miles, only stopped by the efforts of the gendarmerie. A combined French and Belgian counter-attack faded away under machine-gun fire. Concentrated gun-fire, however, added to the moral effect of the rising inundation behind them, caused the Germans to evacuate in the night of the 30th-31st and the village was reoccupied the following morning, and the line of the railway embankment (our barrage) again held by the Allies. Sixty prisoners were taken in the village, and that night proved historic for Belgium, for the invasion had reached high-water mark and would

come no further. The flood had at last risen and the German advance was held up as decisively as Pharaoh's hosts in their pursuit of the Israelites.

On this, the last day of October, the acute phase of the Yser Battle closed, the Germans being definitely defeated and retreating all along the line, leaving many dead and wounded in the inundated area, besides rifles and ammunition and at least one battery of howitzers. They gave vent to their chagrin by bombarding Furnes.

On the following day the King held a parade in the picturesque square at Furnes and decorated the colours of the 7th Regiment with the Order of Leopold and conferred decorations on various officers. The ceremony ended with a march past and one could not but be struck by the confident bearing of the men compared to their appearance only a few days previously. They had for the first time definitely beaten the Germans and it had a wonderful effect on their *moral*.

The Belgians continued to make praiseworthy attempts to extend the bridge-head at Nieuport, but these were frustrated by well-executed German counter-attacks. French territorials captured Lombartzyde on the 8th but were driven out later. On the 10th Dixmude was violently attacked from three sides and captured. The French losses were severe, about 2,000 out of 6,000, mostly bluejackets and Senegalese. Admiral Ronach' had held the place gallantly against almost daily attack for three weeks and had already suffered many casualties. The loss of the town was of little tactical importance as the Allies still held the west bank of the Yser. The brave little Admiral was wounded but remained at the front, and the King went down and laid a decoration on his breast as he lay in bed.

I had already suggested the withdrawal of the Fleet as the nature of the land operations no longer, in my opinion, justified its presence in view of the growing risks it ran from land batteries and mines. With their ships and aircraft the Navy had rendered invaluable aid and the moral effect of their presence was incalculable. They were not "those storm-beaten ships on which the Grand Army never looked," but "close-ups" often in action a mile or two off shore under the eyes of the two armies, and something exciting was always happening to them. There were frequent battles between ships, shore and aircraft. One day we saw Commander Evans (of the *Broke* fame) smartly conceal a disabled monitor with an improvised smoke-screen and then tow her away to safety. Admiral Hood, of the Dover Patrol, was always ready to come out and fight, and so whole-hearted was his co-operation that on one critical day he emptied his ships of big-gun ammunition and returned to Dover to refill, coming back next morning to renew the contest. To save time he empowered me, in an emergency, to call out the ships at Dunkirk without reference to Dover. These were monitors and small craft generally classed as the "coast lice." The Navy also provided a contingent ashore under Commander Hallahan,¹ with 4·7 guns on horse-boats which worked up and down the Furnes–Nieuport canal, an armoured train, as well as machine-guns and detachments which fought in the trenches at Lombartzyde. The naval air-squadron at Dunkirk under Longmore rendered valuable service to the Belgians as they had at that time no air force.

The defence of the Yser by the Belgians was an epic and will endure as a golden page in their history. Their little

¹ Killed in the Zeebrugge blocking operations.

neutral country was less prepared and less war-minded than any other. Brutally assaulted by the first Army in Europe, beaten from pillar to post for two months, their fortresses reduced, their families in the hands of the barbarians or in full flight, their homes in flames, deserted as they thought, by their Allies, the poor little Belgians were called upon to make a supreme effort to hold the last remnant of their territory and they did it in spite of themselves. It was touch and go. They lost 18,000 men, but they held the pass and rendered inestimable service to the Allied cause. The French were inclined to disparage their efforts and to underestimate the enemies opposed to them. It was only Foch, and that after the event, who allowed that they had been attacked by three German Army Corps, largely composed of University students full of ardour, supported by a very powerful artillery. Held together by a few determined officers and inspired by the lofty patriotism of the King, the Belgians fought a good fight.

The King was magnificent. I saw him almost daily in the picturesque *Salle des Echevins* at Furnes and was struck by his courage, his common sense and his foresight. He had none of the Gallic taste for high-sounding phrases, and sometimes found the French Generals rather tiring. His own appreciation of each situation as it arose was invariably sound. Had he not remained at the head of his army history would have been different. His brave consort stayed by his side and busied herself with the care of the wounded and refugees. Their eldest son,¹ still a boy, fought in the ranks of the Grenadiers while still at Eton. The only boy I expect who has gone to school with war medals.

¹ Now King Leopold III.

King George V visited us at this time and conferred the Garter on King Albert in his Headquarters. He asked me if there was still any chance of the Germans breaking through and I was able to tell him that the whole of the Belgian front was now perfectly secure.

Towards the end of December the French took Lombartzyde and St. Georges, and gave us a comfortable bridge-head at Nieuport, the situation became stabilized, and we went into winter quarters in the Napoleonic tradition. Only to the south in the Ypres salient the guns growled continuously. The Belgians had few guns left to growl until they managed to purchase a hundred from the Portuguese Army which fired the same ammunition, and these, thanks to the energetic action of the late Captain A. Lowenstein,¹ then an Artillery officer, were speedily transported to the Yser front.

My brother Edward, who had retired from the Army and was farming in Virginia when war broke out, was now in a New Army battalion of his old regiment, the South Staffords. He came out and spent Christmas with me and had his first glimpse of the war. There was a well-known golf course at Lombartzyde on which the Belgian championship had been played the year before, so after a good lunch, washed down by Nuits St. Georges, Ted and I who used to have very well-contested matches, set out on Christmas Day to try and play a round. We found the club-maker's house, now a strong-point in the front line, still partly standing, and plenty of clubs and balls lying about. Thus equipped we managed to play a good match of seven or eight holes, though the number of bunkers had become rather excessive. We had to hurry on one or two greens owing to the unsporting conduct of

¹ The financier afterwards killed by falling from an aeroplane.

snipers and spent half an hour in a pot bunker guarding the sixth hole. This was in contrast to the procedure of the Bulgarians on the Struma, who allowed our troops to play football under their guns without molestation. The match ended all square and one to play, which we decided to renounce as the Germans seemed to be getting cross.

For other diversion we had a couple of the Duke of Sutherland's polo ponies sent over and could knock the ball about on the hard sands and could always have a good ride on the beach right back to Dunkirk, and take a cup of tea with his charming mother and the lovelies gathering round her. I asked General Birkbeck, the Director of Remounts, to find me a white horse to ride into Berlin on. He sent me out a fine iron-grey with the prophetic remark, "He is not white yet but he will be by the time you get there." Christmas hampers we had galore and one kind lady who kept a hotel in London sent me a grouse-pie and a cheque on Coutts' Bank for one million pounds. The pie was excellent, better indeed than the cheque which now, covered with bankers' asides, graces my scrap-book.

Princess Alice came out several times to see her husband and the two became great friends with the King and Queen and did much to cheer their exile and make life easier for them. My wife was also allowed to pay us a visit. My return to my regiment had been vetoed by Sir John French, and I was still Head of the British Mission with the Belgian Army and was soon given the local rank of Brigadier-General.

Though the Belgian Army was now safe and its situation satisfactory the general strategic outlook gave me sleepless nights. That the Germans should continue to hold Ostend and so much of the Channel shore seemed mon-

strous and after two or three talks at General Headquarters, where I found that the question was already under discussion I was given a staff officer, P. de B. Radcliffe,¹ to come to my headquarters and work out a scheme for the re-capture of Ostend and the coast-line up to the Dutch frontier in conjunction with a "push" that would straighten the line. The Germans at that time were not well dug in and I calculated that we could take Ostend by a naval and military operation with half the casualties of the Battle of Loos. It was an amphibious plan which would have suited our Army and Navy well, but it did not meet with the approval of the French Command who seemed always watchful lest we should act too independently or get too near the sea.

Remembering the desperate losses of Passchendaele fought to achieve this very purpose two and a half years later, one cannot commend the prescience of the high authorities which allowed this scheme to be dismissed to humour our Allies. Ostend and Zeebrugge became indeed increasingly sharp thorns in the side of the Navy and in 1917 the 1st Division was detailed to assist in their capture by a landing operation. But after months of preparation and training this hazardous enterprise was abandoned and the Navy were forced to undertake blocking enterprises which, though glorious and on the whole successful, were desperate and costly.

High dignitaries from General Headquarters visited us to inquire into this proposition and perhaps to have "a quiet day on the Belgian Front." I generally took them down to the Tour des Templiers in Nieuport or to the Vache Crevée, our other observation post from either of which a good view could be obtained. On some days

¹ Late Lieutenant-General Sir P. de B. Radcliffe.

there would be complete calm and on others one would be greeted with a hurricane of fire. I remember accompanying one portly General to Nieuport on a lovely early spring morning. We took sandwiches meaning to make a day of it during which I proposed to convince him of the feasibility of our plans. But I had seen from a distance an occasional column of smoke rising from Nieuport and as we came into the town there was an unnatural quiet and that complete absence of human beings that usually presaged a bombardment. We parked the grey Rolls behind its sheltering house and then started across the Square to the Tower. "We generally double across this bit," I said with a glance at his figure. So we ran and as we panted and puffed along a salvo of shrapnel came over our heads. Arrived at the Tower we had to regain our composure and our breath and then mounted to the top where we found the naval observers busy registering fire for the monitors. "Anything going on?" I asked. "Oh, the usual business," they said. "A few rounds of 32 cm. and a whiff of shrapnel. They are trying to bolt us from the Tower and catch us on the run." My guest blanched. Sure enough crumps began to come over at long but regular intervals, and by and by one hit the base of the Tower and it rocked drunkenly and we were all smothered with red dust. The Navy did not turn a hair but went on giving ranges for the ships down the telephone. After a time there was a lull and our distinguished guest thought he had seen enough and might be wanted at General Headquarters. We had the same exciting dash for cover and even found a few direct hits on the car. Martin was snug in his cellar. "You mustn't think it is always like this," I said, "sometimes it stokes up and gets quite lively."

CHAPTER VII

WITH THE NEW ARMY

There's but the twinkling of a star
Betwixt the man of peace and war.
Hudibras—Butler.

CHAPTER VII

IN anticipation of a forward move we prepared various camouflaged positions for our own heavy artillery (the Belgians had none) as close to the Belgian front line as possible. The Germans were similarly employed, but their work was of a much more permanent character. One of their guns, a naval 15-inch, was installed at Leugenbaum in a deep concrete emplacement in a wood, approached by a railway concealed in a tunnel which took many months to construct. This piece used to fire daily on Dunkirk with such regularity that it was nicknamed the "Time Gun" and when it was due the good citizens would go to ground. Driving through the town one day and finding the streets empty we guessed it must be Bertha's hour and hearing the whine of a shell pulled up. It burst about 150 yards down the street in a large boot emporium and caused a tremendous explosion and for a few moments the air was thick with footwear of every description. The chance of getting shod for nothing brought out all the neighbours, who merrily wrangled and snatched and tried on in the street, despite the bombardment.

It was when working on one of our positions in which a hidden railway led into a faked cottage designed eventually to hold a 9.2 howitzer that we were detected and plastered by shrapnel. I was hit in two places, a fragment lodging in my jaw and another in the point of the shoulder. This was the proper penalty of pride, for my companions had thrown themselves on the ground and escaped injury.

There was a first-rate Belgian Hospital at La Panne, under the ægis of the Queen. It was indeed more than a hospital, it was an asylum for many Belgian refugee craftsmen who made instruments, artificial limbs and eyes, etc. Here I had the piece pulled out of my jaw at once. The other was more complicated as it had gone right into the shoulder-joint. However, I was fortunate in finding a brilliant left-handed surgeon in Dr. De Page, the head of the hospital who sawed the top off the point of the shoulder and removed the offending morsel. In some miraculous way I retained all the movement of the shoulder, and happening to meet Dr. De Page years after in the Rue de la Loi in Brussels, he astonished people by seizing my wrist and swinging my arm in every direction with grunts of satisfaction.

Just before performing this operation he had had a bad shock. His wife had been to America to collect funds for the hospital and I had obtained leave for him to go to England to meet her. But the unfortunate woman was on board the *Lusitania*, and when the ship was torpedoed and sunk the doctor could get no news of her. So he went over to Ireland and identified her body, and in some surreptitious way managed to bring it back to Belgium and he had buried her in the sand-dunes close to the hospital.

The Queen devoted herself to the wounded and was in the hospital daily and frequently came to see me. She was brave and gay and had several little jokes with our Mission. She sent me once in the hospital a piece of a shell which she had labelled "Souvenir of the British Fleet found in my garden." She used to reprove me for driving too fast (I was generally in a hurry). One day I knocked over a Belgian soldier on a bicycle and cut his head open and duly deposited him in the nearest hospital. A few

days later I looked in to inquire after his health and found him convalescing with the usual ticket over his bed with name and number, etc., to which was added in the Queen's handwriting, "Victime du Colonel Bridges."

My shoulder did not heal quickly, so I got leave home and went to Brighton. After a month's holiday I was recalled by Sir W. Robertson, then Chief of the General Staff, to put propositions for a combined offensive before the Belgian Staff. While actually on the boat at Folkestone the Landing Officer handed me a telegram which ordered me to proceed to Bristol forthwith and take ship there for the Dardanelles, where I had been appointed to command a brigade in the 29th Division. I managed to get on to the War Office by telephone from the quay, spoke to Fitzgerald, and gave several good reasons why I should not go to the Dardanelles:

- (a) I was urgently required in Belgium.
- (b) I was not at war with the Turks.
- (c) I had not been passed by a medical board and still had an open wound in my shoulder.

He repeated this to Lord Kitchener and the order was rescinded. When I told Sir W. Robertson this story he wagged his eyebrows disapprovingly at me and said, "This is the sort of war where you do as you are told."

The proposed operation, as far as the Belgians were concerned, fell through. They were, rightly I considered, determined not to waste their very limited man-power in secondary schemes but to reserve all their strength for the final general advance which would give them back their country. This point of view was not popular at our General Headquarters, but I upheld it at any conferences at which I was present.

There was, to me, a memorable meeting that summer at Walmer Castle, where my wife and I spent the week-end with the Prime Minister and Mrs. Asquith. The other guests were Lord Kitchener, Lord D'Abernon, Winston Churchill and Maurice Bonham Carter. As far as I remember no decisions were reached. At one moment we were divided in opinion three and three, Lord Kitchener, Lord D'Abernon and myself against the others, described by Asquith as the Giants *v.* the Pigmies.

We finished the evening with physical jerks and Mrs. Asquith, who had retired early returned to show us how to kiss the wall backwards. Henry looked in from his study to say in a sepulchral voice, "Margot! Have you *no* shame?" The answer was, "None!"

Walmer Castle is full of reminiscences of the Iron Duke. There is his death-mask and the little camp bed in which he slept saying, "Time to turn over, time to turn out." It was on the battlements where he often chatted to my grandmother that he evolved the historic name of Thomas Atkins for the soldiers' pay sheet. Mr. Atkins was not, as many think, a fictitious person, but a very real soldier, the right-hand man of the Grenadier company of the 33rd, killed in the Low Countries in Colonel Wellesley's first attack with the thin red line against the column. Strange just a hundred years after Waterloo to be making plans here for the French to beat our old allies the Germans. How the old gentleman would have chuckled!

One had to admire Henry Asquith's great qualities, his vast learning and experience and his sterling integrity and loyalty though he was not tuned up to the war tempo. His family setting was distinguished by charm, affection and intelligence. One week-end that my wife and I spent at the Wharf during the war occurs to me. It had

been a wet Sunday and somehow Raymond Asquith had haunted the house. Elizabeth Asquith had been reading us his poems and other work. He was a brilliant scholar and they were all proud of him, especially his father. After dinner, when the ladies had left, Asquith, Jack Cowans¹ and I were sitting in the dining-room and he told us how Raymond had refused a staff appointment to stay with his battalion of the Guards. Then the butler came in and asked Mr. Asquith to go to the telephone. He said he never telephoned but the butler said an officer from the War Office wanted to speak to him personally. When he left the room Cowans said, "I hope nothing has happened to Raymond." The butler returned and said Mr. Asquith begged us to excuse him. He had gone up to his room, Mr. Raymond had been killed that morning.

Such happenings, alas, became all too common. My wife's boy, Freddy Marshall, joined the Grenadiers, his father's regiment, very young from Sandhurst, in 1915. He saw some hard fighting at Ypres, had been blown up and been through a rough time generally. I asked him up for a week-end to La Panne, and finding him not as fit as he should be, wrote to Lord Cavan and asked if I might not have him attached to my mission for a month or two. This he agreed to as soon as he could get out some fresh officers from home. But in the meantime, by one of those strange whims of fate that were continually manifested, the boy was killed at Givenchy during a lull by a stray bullet on his way to tea with the padre.

Lord Roberts died on 15th November, 1914, at St. Omer, while on a visit to the troops, British and Indian, that he had loved and served so well. I went to the funeral service. What stirred me most was when little

¹ The late General Sir John Cowans, Q.M.G.

Sir Pertab Singh, blue with cold, mounted the box-seat of the ambulance that held the coffin and laid his sword across his knees to accompany his old chief to his last resting-place.

There passed a great soldier, modest, devoted and indomitable, whose first thought was the care of his troops.

1914-15 was a record wet winter for twenty years in Flanders, and most of the Army was waterlogged and suffered severely from trench feet. The Germans were as uncomfortable as we were and there was a certain fellow-feeling for them in the ranks. "Jerry was not such a bad chap." Greetings posted up over the trenches, mild fraternization at Christmas and so forth. But all this died with the first gas-attack and our men began to take more interest in bayonet fighting.

But the British soldier, a true mercenary, is a bad hater, and has generally a fellow-feeling for his antagonist. Kipling understood this well when he made Thomas Atkins say:

What is the sense of hatin' those
'Oom you are paid to kill.

and again,

Here's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy
In your home in the Sudan,
You're a pore benighted heathen
But a first-class fighting man.

During the Battle of the Somme I watched a batch of German prisoners resting by the roadside. The attitude of our men towards them was one of benevolent curiosity. They tried to make themselves understood, and "Kellner" was frequently used as they thought every second German

soldier had been a waiter at the Ritz in London. They urged the Germans to sing the "Hymn of Hate" in a sincere desire to acquire something new to sing on their way to the trenches. Cigarettes were freely offered and a little Cockney minced down the line crying, "Cigarettes! Chockluts!" and distributing them, until interrupted by the Voice of Doom in the shape of a stentorian sergeant-major:

"Nah then! Enough of that coddlin'. Shove those bastards in the cage."

The common soldier, and one must remember that he was representative of the best of our race, had an innate sense of fair play. That a foot should be kept on Germany's neck for years after the war was to him inexplicable. It was like counting a man out in the ring and then stamping on him. And his instinct was right for this prolonged domination ruined Germany's attempts at democracy and forced her to Nazism to save the country from ruin.

Gradually the Army trained on to war under the new conditions. Ammunition was scarce and was strictly rationed (four rounds per gun per day), but the ingenious troops found various ways of annoying each other and damaging themselves. New inventions in bombs, jam-pots full of dynamite, catapults for the same, mortars and mines kept them occupied, and other devilments made their appearance. Our spring campaign, consisting of affairs at Fromelles, Neuve Chapelle and Festubert, was a failure. We had many tactical lessons to learn, but the defective ammunition supply deserved and got most of the blame and produced a crisis at home.

The Battle of Loos in September from which so much was expected was fought I believe to please the French.

It was a shattering affair which gave us a few miles of muddy ground and a few thousand prisoners at the cost of 40,000 casualties with no gain in *moral* though some perhaps in bitter experience. It was said by General Headquarters to have taught us valuable lessons for the future but its chief lesson was that in a battle the reserves should be near enough at hand to exploit success, an axiom from the time of Hannibal. This led to recriminations and rumours as to a pending change in command. Popular opinion pointed to Haig as the *prétendant*, though Plumer would probably have had the army's vote. But happily the choice of Commanders-in-Chief was not part of our duty. French had worked hard for years to fit himself for his position, and he was popular in the Army. But after the Retreat he had a good many detractors. His skilful march north from the Aisne, however, which beat the Germans to the sea and saved the Channel ports at the stubborn First Battle of Ypres will always be remembered in his favour.

After Loos I handed over the Mission with the Belgian Army to Lord Athlone, who remained its tactful and efficient Chief up to the end of the war.

I said good-bye to the King and Queen, whose courage and devotion had inspired me with deep admiration. I was destined to see them from time to time. When they paid their state visit to London after the war I was in attendance, and King Albert, like Leopold I, was appointed Colonel-in-Chief of the 5th Dragoon Guards, of which regiment I was later Colonel. He liked to hear about his regiment and sometimes my wife and I were invited to stay at Laeken with them. Family life here was of the simplest and quietest. My wife played golf with the Queen in the Park and accompanied her violin

which she played well. The King, an extremely conscientious prince, rose very early and worked most of the day. His knowledge was profound and covered a wide range of subjects. He was particularly interested in colonial development. Diligent himself, he was a martinet for the education of his children. They all seemed shy and scarcely spoke in his presence if strangers were there. King Albert went to see the regiment when travelling in India and also inspected it at Aldershot shortly before his untimely death. An instance typical of his faculty of observation occurred at the "Red Church" when he visited the regimental War Memorial. He asked what the two fir-trees were that stood outside the church. Various classifications were suggested, but the Chaplain authoritatively dubbed them deodars. But the King knew the deodar and had us all stumped and we had to find out after he left and let him know. They were, I think, a species of cypress from the Holy Land. That night King Albert dined with the officers of his regiment, past and present, about a hundred strong, at the Cavalry Club. Contrary to his wont he sat up late and had a talk with each officer who had commanded the Fifth or the Inniskillings, the two regiments being then amalgamated. This connexion with the Royal House of Belgium still continues and the regiment is now honoured by having King Leopold III as its Colonel-in-Chief.

I was now ordered to take over command of the 19th (Western) Division from General Faskin, an Indian officer. Though liaison work was interesting I was glad to go as for a long time I had felt I was not pulling my weight in the boat, and should be with troops. The Division had been knocked about, some of the battalions were in poor shape and most of the senior officers were

"dug-outs," splendid fellows generally but too old for the front line. I was given *carte blanche* to reorganize the personnel. The losses in regular infantry officers throughout the Army had been very severe and there were none of any experience now available. So I turned to the Cavalry, where there were still plenty of young officers who would be glad of a chance to win their spurs with the Queen of Battles. This gave me a gallant band of cavaliers, Toby Long, Carton de Wiart, Tolley, Jones, Alex Thynne, Worgan, Howard de Walden and others. One Brigadier, Tom Cubitt, I managed to extract from the gunners, after much argument. The Divisional staff was excellent. The elderly infantry officers made gallant efforts to remain in the trenches but we had to be inexorable. One of the few originals who survived was a dapper, horsey, black-haired colonel who seemed thoroughly fit and up to his job. He was unfortunate enough to get shot in the neck and sometime later when I went to the Field Hospital to see him I was introduced to a grey-haired and moustached "Old Bill" whose wound and bandages precluded speech. "This is not my Colonel P.?" I said. "Oh yes it is," said the Sister, "but the Colonel has run out of hair dye." One had heard of hair turning white through fright, but never before of its turning black through courage. My own hair turned very grey during the war, and my hair-cutter at Truefitts once remarked on it. "Fright," I said. "Well," he said, "I did not like to say so, but I've noticed the same in a lot of gentlemen I know."

At this period Divisions were ordered to suppress their numbers as far as possible and to use signs to make identification by the enemy less easy. These signs were to be painted on all guns and vehicles, etc. This led to a

medley of strange and often ferocious effigies. Surrounded by lions, wild boars, dragons, scorpions, and mailed fists, we chose a butterfly of Whistlerian simplicity. To the French we became "La Division Papillon" and the name seemed to tickle them.

Soon after taking over the Division I had a personal letter from Sir John French, in which he said that he proposed to appoint Winston Churchill to command a brigade in the division. I had no doubt that Winston would have been an able and energetic brigadier and I would have liked to have had him but felt constrained to point out that there were several good men who had commanded their regiments on service available for such an appointment who should not be passed over by one who, however brilliant, had had no experience of command. So Winston took over a battalion of Royal Scots, which he led with distinction until such time as he was again required for ministerial duties in London.

In his place I succeeded in getting "Ma" Jeffreys, from the Grenadier Guards who made a first-rate brigadier, and eventually commanded the Division, though I think *his* hair turned prematurely grey in the meantime—the drill of the new army at that time and their manual exercise being a long way from Guards' standards. After he had been wounded at Neuve Chapelle and was due to come back, I expected him to go to the Guards Division, but wrote to him inviting him back to his old brigade, saying that any ass could command a Brigade of Guards, but it took a superman to command one in the 19th Division. He came back to us.

Towards the end of May 1915 I got news that my brother Ted had been badly wounded at Suvla Bay, where he had landed with the 11th Division. So well were

secrets kept that I did not even know that he had gone to the Dardanelles. This operation, brilliantly conceived and begun, ended in utter failure owing to the ineptitude of the higher command. As Winston Churchill aptly puts it, "The long and varied annals of the British Army contain no more heartbreaking episode than the Battle of Suvla Bay."

There seems to have been some evil genius dogging all the operations of the Dardanelles. The three horses of the *troika*, War Cabinet, Army and Navy, were never disposed to pull at one and the same time. First the Navy had a pull, and then the Army, then the War Cabinet got interested. But by the time Navy and Army really got working together the War Cabinet was jibbing again and involved in a political crisis and the Dardanelles was forgotten for six weeks.

Ian Hamilton had a hard task. Though showing little aptitude for the offensive—two Turkish armies had been destroyed in the Caucasus, and the attack on the Suez Canal had been beaten off by a corporal's guard—the Turks in their trenches were proverbially stubborn fighters and only surprise was likely to defeat them. The attack on Suvla Bay seemed to offer Sir Ian this advantage.

The 11th Division landed there without opposition on the night of the 6th-7th May, but, for obscure reasons, did not advance on its first objective, Chocolate Hill, until the next evening. The 10th Division landed on the 7th, but spent most of that day and the next resting and bathing as though at Clacton-on-Sea. Twenty thousand British troops were supinely facing about eighteen hundred Turkish gendarmerie spread over a wide front on the hills above them. The secrecy seems to have been so thorough that no one knew what to do next.

Where was the Iron Duke's nose? It was not until the afternoon of the 8th that Sir Ian Hamilton who had another battle on his hands, arrived and urged General Stopford to take the key position, the Anafarta Ridge. Too late! Napoleon once said, "Time! Ask me for anything but Time." And here were two days of that priceless element of war wasted at what might well have proved a decisive point. And what were those lazy Turks doing? The 11th and 7th Turkish Divisions, the nearest available reinforcements for the screen of sharp-shooters at Anafarta, were disposed at Bulair, the obvious place to attempt a landing, nearly thirty miles away and heard of the descent on Suvla early on the morning of the 7th. They were ordered to move at once for Anafarta, where the agitated German Commander-in-Chief, Liman von Sanders, had already taken up his stand. By desperate marching the Turks arrived on the high ground before the leisurely British attack developed and, under the command of one Mustapha Kemal were able to beat it off.

My brother, then a captain, found himself by the process of elimination, in command of his battalion, but was soon transferred to command the brigade machine-guns. It was in holding on to his positions against Turkish counter-attacks that he was badly wounded, but refused to leave his guns until the fight was over and the position secured. He was mentioned in dispatches for behaving with great gallantry and I believe was one of the very few officers of the 11th Division to receive any recognition. Subsequently he had a taste of the horrors of war. His broken arm was ill-set, he got dysentery and was evacuated under Crimean conditions unrelieved by any Florence Nightingale. Ill-luck continued to pursue him. When convalescent he went to France as Chief Instructor of a

training-camp for Australians. Riding back to his quarters one evening his horse took fright in a thunderstorm and bolted. With his one sound arm he was unable to pull him up and galloped into a barbed wire entanglement. He woke up in the Middlesex Hospital in London and never managed to get past the doctors again.

About this time the Prince of Wales, who used to come frequently to see us at La Panne, came and stayed a night with me to inspect a battalion of "Prince of Wales' Own" which seemed to find it difficult to get over a gruelling at Loos. Just as he was going to bed after dinner he said, "No damned nonsense about making a speech you know." I told him the battalion would be very disappointed if he did not say a few words. He refused, but I had a few lines typed ready for him which he delivered next morning to the battalion drawn up in the snow. I understand that this was his first speech. He was a good and conscientious soldier and relished danger, so much so as to be at times a great anxiety to those responsible for his safety. He was so full of promise that no one wanted him to get killed, less still to be captured, as might have happened in an enemy raid.

In the spring of 1916 I got a recruit for the Division. During a short leave while lunching with Arthur Capel in Paris I saw something strange in his garden which proved to be a lion cub won in a Red Cross raffle a few days before. He offered me the beast and I took it away in a champagne hamper in the car to its new home. We called him Poilu and he had a sister Cleo who belonged to the Duc d'Orléans and was subsequently sent to the Zoo in Regent's Park. Poilu soon made himself at home, for he was an amiable beast, and never showed temper and he stayed with us, running loose, until September 1917

when I was wounded. He then went home in charge of one of my aides-de-camp and there was quite a party on board ship when he broke out of his crate during a rough passage and took command of the vessel, tree-ing crew and passengers on the bridge or in the rigging, until finally induced by his "batman" to enter a first-class cabin. He was not *persona grata* with the Adjutant-General, and I had intimations from him that the Commander-in-Chief disapproved and that Poilu should be sent away. But the answer was "Come and take him" or words to that effect. He helped to amuse the men and the legend grew that he was being trained to go over the top as soon as big enough. He was not difficult to feed and it was one aide-de-camp's job to see that he did not go hungry and this officer could be heard sometimes telephoning, "Anybody got a dead horse this morning? All right, I'll send a car down for a haunch." Poilu lived to be benign and mellow in Mr. Tyrwhitt-Drake's private collection near Maidstone. Always the perfect gentleman, he contrived to die aged nineteen, on the 19th of June, the mascot of the 19th Division. In a newspaper which announced this important fact it added as if in afterthought, "The Duke of Wellington died yesterday on Waterloo Day."

High authority sometimes failed to realize that anything that kept men's spirits up and gave them something to talk about was an asset. The New Army divisions had no bands. To Lord Kitchener a man was a soldier and should have a rifle and every bandsman was one soldier less. I had strong views on bands and as soon as I took over the 19th wrote to Lord Derby, then at the War Office, for help. He responded nobly, and thanks to his generosity and that of the Lord Mayor of London, we were soon equipped with a fine band led by one of the Godfrey family.

He was later replaced by a fanatical band-trainer from Glasgow, named Eskdaile, whose hobby was playing as near the front line as possible. When I returned to the division after my visit to America, arriving at the Scherpenberg at midnight, he had the band out to play "Now thank we all our God" outside the dug-out where my *locum tenens* was sleeping. He emerged furious at the noise though not at the tune, which no doubt he failed to recognize. Each regiment soon had its band, and the 6th Wilts (Toby Long's¹ battalion) added a dozen clairs (French trumpets). The combination of these with the band was stirring, and when they played "Paris-Belfort" one would, as a battalion commander said to me, "charge anything." I think the proudest man on parade when Sir Douglas Haig inspected us before the Somme battle was the little French *clairon* (trumpet-major) of the Chasseurs-Alpins, who strutted at the head of the battalion in his blue uniform and beret.

Our time at Neuve Chapelle was fully occupied with nursing the division back to health after the nasty shock of Loos, carrying out demonstrations and trench raids and generally training ourselves for things to come. We were now in the troglodyte period, burrowing diligently and deep in praiseworthy efforts to blow each other to perdition. There was a salient on our front called the Duck's Bill which was known to be mined and in which we kept a minimum of men. One night, however, when we had a new division, the Bantams, with us for instruction, the enemy sensing the fact that the trenches were more crowded than usual, exploded his mine and blew the Duck's Bill and everyone in it sky-high. Fritz

¹ Scots Greys; son of Lord Long of Wraxall, killed later commanding a brigade of the 19th Division.

occupied the crater, but the battalion in charge was ready and bombed him out of it, consolidating the further lip and holding it. I went up in the morning to have a look round. Fresh crater earth is poor walking, being like a bad chocolate soufflé. The crater had already been carefully organized by the officer who had taken charge, and he proudly pointed out his dispositions. He had a housemaid's mind and had disposed everything with great neatness like a kit inspection. Rows of rifles, bayonets, steel-helmets, picks, shovels, gas-masks, piles of waterproof sheets, all ready for salvage and on one flank a row of corpses all ready for burial. We renamed the salient "The Lion's Mouth."

During this period I was sent for to London to assist in the preparation of the East African campaign, which it was proposed I should conduct. The command had already been offered to General Smuts who had refused it. Simpson-Baikie,¹ an old friend, with a brilliant staff officer's brain, was to be Chief of the Staff. We worked in Freddie Guest's house in Park Lane, where we examined all available experts before finally committing our plan to paper. The experts included Selous, the doyen of big-game hunters, whom I had not seen for years, and Cunningham (the White Hunter), both remarkable men. Selous was killed during the operations, and Cunningham reported killed, but only captured and afterwards released.

I believe that the plan finally carried out was our original scheme, with the important exception of the rest period of four months during the rainy season prescribed by us on the advice of the experts. The neglect of this measure led to heavy wastage in men and

¹ The late Major-General Sir Hugh Simpson-Baikie.

transport and probably prolonged the campaign unduly and added greatly to the expense.

While these preparations were in progress someone at the War Office discovered that I was really only a Colonel and had no business to command a big expedition and be put over the heads of two Majors-General already in East Africa, although it was not proposed to give either of them the Command. I understood that the Government were willing but the Military Hierarchy adamant. So the expedition became still more important and General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien was appointed to command, and I was to go out as his second-in-command and potential successor. In the meantime it seemed to me that I should be of more use commanding the 19th Division, and I asked the Chief of the Imperial General Staff whether, in the circumstances, I could not be relieved and returned to duty in France, and this was done—my place being taken by my old friend Hoskins.

Smith-Dorrien went sick at Capetown and Smuts stepped into the breach. But though Smuts after a year's impatient campaigning occupied East Africa, the enemy, under command of Von Lettow Vorbeck, still remained in being, and, local climatic conditions having been disregarded, our losses in troops and transport were enormous. Half the whites were in hospital and the other half had to be sent home, and some 30,000 animals perished. Smuts returned to Capetown leaving Hoskins to clean up. But the latter had to demand such substantial replacements of men, animals and material that he in turn was superseded by Van Deventer. This dashing commando leader continued to chase Von Lettow without success, until in 1918 the Germans were actually back in East Africa

and still holding out at the time of the Armistice, when they were given special terms of surrender.

Next came the Battle of Jutland. One cannot deny that the results were a disappointment to the Army. The simple soldier, ignorant of the difficulty of handling large fleets, was so convinced that if the German High Sea Fleet was ever so rash as to emerge from its lair, the Bull-dog Beatty would seize it by the throat and hold on until Jellicoe came up to pound the life out of it and sink the lot, that it was a sad shock to find the Germans not only still afloat but even claiming a victory. They retired to their corner, having won the round on points, and suffered half our casualties in ships and men. True they did not come out again, except as David Beatty predicted, "on a string," but we were not to know that. Nor did we know that Jellicoe and Beatty had imposed their will on the German Fleet and definitely assumed position of "Top Dog."

To the landsman Jutland was a complicated and incomprehensible affair long covered by an unnecessary smoke-screen. A modern fleet action is no doubt fraught with great difficulties, and fleet control has to be highly centralized. But communications do and did break down, and we are told that for one whole vital night none of the important reports of contact with the enemy reached the Flagship.

The "little Captain of the Boreas," when he left Emma Hamilton to the nation, bequeathed us at the same time a still more valuable legacy. His memorandum to his Captains, written on board the *Victory* twelve days before the Battle of Trafalgar, concludes: "In case signals cannot be seen or are imperfectly understood, no Captain can do very wrong if he places his ship alongside that of an

enemy." No one doubted that the daring spirit of initiative which is the hall-mark of the British Navy still persisted, in fact we had many brilliant examples of it during the war, but one hoped that no system of control would ever be allowed to hamper its manifestation.

Specially prepared for this North Sea battle the Germans seem to have excelled us in gunnery and in the construction of their vessels. Several of our ships blew up when hit. This was the fate of my gallant friend, Horace Hood, Beatty's second-in-command, whose ship the *Invincible*, was blown in half and lost with all hands; a decisive end which somehow left one rather envious of the Navy. A modern land battle besides being, as a friend of mine used to say, "A muddy, bloody, lousy affair," was always long-drawn-out, and success was often more expensive than failure. Win or lose you would be in the line for at least a week and then probably relieved in a state of exhaustion. But the sister service managed things better. Within a few hours of leaving port you would either be comfortably at the bottom of the sea with your whole ship's company or enjoying a hot bath and a whisky and soda and fighting the battle over again.

With Jutland still on every tongue, came the news of the loss of Kitchener in the *Hampshire*, when on a mission to Russia that might have prolonged her co-operation in the war with far-reaching consequences.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME

Nor needs he any hearse to bear him hence
Who goes to join the men of Agincourt.
The Volunteer, Herbert Asquith.

CHAPTER VIII

THE long-drawn-out agony of Verdun and the heavy losses of the French soon made it clear that it was our turn to create a diversion, so we fought the Battle of the Somme, a well-advertised affair directed against a deep system of trenches that the Germans had spent two years fortifying.

When the 19th Division moved south to join General Pulteney's 3rd Corps for this battle it was indeed a unit to be proud of, and the Commander-in-Chief after inspecting us was very complimentary. Nor was this excellence only in appearance, everyone had worked hard for months to put the sharpest edge on his own part of the blade and the weapon as a whole was well balanced and handy. The men were well trained, fit and full of the enthusiasm of the citizen-soldier and the staff and technical services well-nigh perfect.

Though placed under the 3rd Corps for the preliminary attack, in the event of its success, the 19th Division became part of the Army of Pursuit under Gough. I was to command the spearhead of this pursuit with the 19th, an Indian cavalry division and some mobile heavy artillery and cyclists. If all went well we were to reach Bapaume (ten miles on) the evening of the opening day. If all went not quite so well and one of the two front-line divisions of the Corps failed in the attack, we were to take on the job. If things went badly and both divisions were held up, we were liable to be called on in support.

The general plan of the operation was a break through

on a very wide front, and then a rolling up of the exposed enemy flanks, the French moving towards the south-east and the British to the north-east, while through the gap poured the 19th Division and the cavalry. To avoid identification by the enemy the 19th were forbidden the front line, but I lost no time in having a look at it with Marr-Johnson, my General Staff Officer I.¹ After a careful reconnaissance we came to the conclusion that we did not envy anyone their job. The same thought had struck us both. In the middle of this portion of the front lay the village of La Boisselle, a hamlet of thirty-five houses, forming a sharp salient to within 100 yards of our line. But on either flank no-man's-land widened alarmingly to as much as 1,000 yards and for troops to cross this unless the front line was first pulverized seemed impossible. Also we knew that the Germans were snugly and deeply dug in and could in all probability live out a bombardment and pop up with their machine-guns when it was over. The idea of the "creeping" barrage which greatly facilitated an infantry advance had not then reached us, and the prospect seemed anything but inviting. However, we had not got to do it, and perhaps special provision had been made to meet this eventuality.

We lived at this time at Albert in the Villa des Rochers, once the home of Jules Verne. Under it were considerable galleries where *Notre Dame des Brebis* had appeared to the sheep. A small fee was demanded of the pious to view them in peace-time. More important than the sheep several companies of infantry could be safely sheltered there. Our Lady on the church spire was still firmly attached by her feet in a horizontal position.

¹ As General Staff Officers are referred to somewhat frequently in the narrative they will be written G.S.O. 1, 2, or 3.

Prophecy had said that when she fell, the war would be over. We had an advanced headquarters near the front line.

The country round Amiens was open and undulating, and a pleasant change from Flanders, and one was able to have a good gallop without hindrance. Partridges teemed that summer, and I visited an acquaintance, Clermont Tonnerre, who said that in spite of the war he had never seen them so plentiful. The château of Thiepval, shortly to become a mud heap and the scene of heavy and ceaseless fighting, had been bought in 1914 at a fancy price as a sporting property, and the line of apple-trees "les Pom-miers" marked in our trench maps was one of the best partridge drives in France.

I went for long rides, followed by an Irish henchman, and standard bearer from the 4th Dragoon Guards. It was a joy to see this man on a horse. He had the easy seat of the riders on the Elgin marbles, beautiful hands, and a profile like Dante. He was an elderly "back to the Army" man and a bitter fighter and wore the coveted D.C.M., the best all-round medal of the Army. One night, finding two young officers of the New Army trying to stable their horses at the expense of my grey, Berlin, he had an altercation which ended in his knocking one of them down and being arrested. "When on active service striking an officer: Penalty, Death." Miraculously the Court let him off. I was told that his defence was disarming. "Arrah, Colonel," he said, "y'know them's not officers!" He was reputed to be a prominent Sinn Feiner, and during the Trouble after the cold-blooded murders of the Irish Rebellion, I asked him what it all meant. "Sure," he said, "it's only the bhoys will be having their bit of fun, nobody's heard tell of them these long whiles."

Zero hour on 1st July was at 7.30 a.m., and half an

hour before with a continuous stream of shells both ways overhead, the chaplain administered the sacrament to us in the little cottage where we had our advanced headquarters. We then had breakfast and waited to hear from our liaison officers how the battle was going. When the tremendous seven-day bombardment ceased there was a tense silence for a time, and one could hear larks singing, then ear-splitting guns began again, the drum-fire of the attack, and we could also hear heavy machine-gun firing of the staccato kind that belonged to the Germans and experienced no feelings of envy towards the front-line troops, but were only devoutly thankful to be able to preserve our entity a little longer. Time enough to worry this afternoon when the spear-point moved on Bapaume. But it became gradually borne in on us during the day that although things had gone well to the south, the attack on our front and all to the north of us had entirely failed, and that the losses had been enormous. As we feared, the bombardment had not destroyed the front line, and the pause between the lifting of the barrage and the arrival of the attacking infantry had been long enough to allow the German machine-gunners to bring their guns up out of their holes and to get to work, spraying the advance and the lanes already cut by our guns in the wire entanglements. The Tynesiders had gone through the front line magnificently but had failed to make good in their rear and many were now cut off. The 8th Division on their left had fared no better and were back in their trenches. Late in the afternoon we received the order which we had expected, but which was not on the programme, to capture the salient, La Boisselle, at all costs.

The Division had been edging its way forward and should soon be within striking distance, so I ordered the

attack for 10.30 p.m., hoping to seize the place under cover of darkness. But such was the congestion in the trenches from the casualties, stretchers and stragglers of the troops we were relieving, that the Brigade detailed was unable to get up to the front line, and the attack had to be postponed. Nor were the conditions much improved when daylight came, so that eventually the attack had to be again postponed until 4 p.m. (2nd July).

We were now back at the situation of zero hour of the day before, but with the enemy thoroughly on the *qui vive*. Another bombardment and straightforward attack could but lead to our annihilation. So we arranged to simulate an attack on Ovillers on our left. We got all available guns to concentrate on that sector for a short and intense bombardment, and infantry to show their fixed bayonets in the front line. A smoke barrage heightened the illusion. My orders were "La Boisselle will be taken this afternoon without fail and regardless of loss." Under cover of the above demonstration three companies of the Wilts in the lightest fighting order raced across no-man's-land and got into the village with scarcely a shot fired at them—while at the same time the Welch Fusiliers effected a lodgment to their right. They were speedily reinforced, and a lot of hard hand-to-hand fighting ensued.

The place was a rabbit warren, the result of two years' tunnelling by the people actually holding it who did not mean to be dislodged. But in an hour and a half the western portion was in our hands and a line across it consolidated and parties were bombing their way through the village, nearly every house of which was a strong point with dug-outs thirty to forty feet deep. Desperate fighting went on all night, the German bombers counter-attacking with great gallantry and two battalions of

reinforcements had to be put in. At 3 a.m. on the 3rd Ovillers on our left was attacked by the 12th Division and the 57th Brigade of ours seized the craters and trenches to the north of La Boisselle, taking two hundred prisoners, and during the day we mopped up to the eastern outskirts of the village where the enemy still hung on. Their shelling of the part of the village in our hands was heavy. Reports were very confused and I was anxious that there should be no misleading orders given. Remembering the tragedy of Spion Kop, I went across into the village at 6 p.m. with my G.S.O. 2, Haskard. We made our way up to the consolidated line which we found full of our men, and had a talk with Carton de Wiart commanding the 8th Gloucesters. Two commanding officers had been killed and two wounded, so I placed the whole of the troops in the village under his command. The Germans were putting up a tremendous fight and what dead I saw about were big bearded men belonging to a pioneer battalion, who no doubt resented being turned out of their comfortable home.

By eight the next morning the place was reported clear of the enemy, but it is probable that snipers and bombers still lurked in ambush, for soon began a series of counter-attacks, that drove the Wilts, Cheshires and Welch Fusiliers back to their starting positions. But bombers of the 9th Welch gradually regained the lost ground. Meanwhile the northern half of the village was again wrested from the 57th Brigade, and they also were driven back to the consolidated half-way line of the hedge. At 12.30 p.m. the situation was desperate. Had the line given at this point it is probable that the enemy would have recaptured the whole of the village. That he did not do so was, according to eye-witnesses, due to the gallantry of Carton

de Wiart, who led his men from one danger point to another, himself bombing the enemy with gusto out of their positions. By the late afternoon the whole village was again in our hands. As De Wiart had already lost an arm and an eye in action I recommended him for the V.C. This was one of three V.C.s given to the Division for this action and a fourth was awarded later. Carton de Wiart was shortly afterwards shot in the neck making the fourth battalion commander of his brigade to go down. This officer was wounded eleven times and each time returned to the war. He had a berserk fighting spirit which reminded me of Sir Andrew Barton:

Fight on, my men . . .
I am hurt, but I am not slain.
I'll lay me down and bleed awhile
And then I'll rise and fight again.

That the casualty list was 3,500 in an area not much larger than Trafalgar Square speaks for the desperate nature of the three days' continuous struggle. It was a real "dog fight," a soldier's battle, and the Germans never fought like that again. A memorial to the Division stands at the roadside close to the village of La Boisselle.

Another stout fighter, Peter Winsor,¹ now took over command of the front line, and we went on enlarging our hold on the environs and consolidating until finally relieved on 9th July and sent back to Our Lady of the Sheep.

"Rawly," the Army Commander, came to see us before we left the line and handed bouquets to the Division. He gave me a sharp rap over the knuckles for being in the front line during an attack and had me promoted to Major-General. I was now forty-five.

¹ Colonel P. Winsor, of the South Lancs.

The Somme Battle continued in a desultory way. Grand attacks gave place to nibbling. We were given three bites which we found just as costly as the full-dress dinner. By this time the whole area was broken up by shell-fire and it was difficult to get about and see the troops. I rode whenever the state of the ground permitted as it saved much time and motoring was impossible. On our second tour Berlin carried me up the blood-stained slopes of Contalmaison, scarcely shot at owing to a great air fight going on over our heads. One of our 'planes was brought down in flames close to us, but our people chased the Germans off. Alex Thynne¹ was killed at this time, leading his battalion in an attack.

October found us on the Ancre with weather conditions bad and the state of the ground so soggy as to be in places impassable. The mud in the captured trenches was sometimes thigh deep. The men suffered from exhaustion but remained cheerful as ever. We were now in the Reserve Army under Gough, who with the true cavalry spirit, was always for pushing on. A major operation planned had to be reduced to nibbling on account of the bad conditions. Some of this was successfully accomplished, but as far as the 19th Division went one affair was a crass failure. This was a combined operation of portions of the 2nd and 5th Corps to capture Grandcourt. The difficulties for the 19th were great. As frequently happened the scope of the operation was hopefully extended at the last moment owing to a frost which had hardened the ground. At 6.10 a.m., however, when the barrage opened, the attack began under the worst possible conditions. A thaw had set in, it was still dark and sleet falling. Nevertheless the battalions advanced, got right

¹ Colonel Lord Alex. Thynne.

under their own artillery barrage and moved through it. They were soon lost to observation. Owing to repeated postponement of the operation and the difficulties of reliefs the 57th Brigade had to move into its assembly position after dark and attack next morning over unfamiliar ground. It was a wonder that they did so well. The Gloucesters marched straight into Grandcourt and captured a gun and some prisoners, and the Warwicks on their left reached their second objective. All touch was lost with the 8th North Staffords on the right. This unfortunate battalion in the dark went straight through the German front line for a considerable distance without recognizing it. The mopping-up parties lost their way in the dark and the remainder of the battalion was captured. It was commanded by a Colonel Anderson, a South African Light Horseman, and with him was my old friend and fellow scout of Natal days, Stanley London. The latter was killed. Anderson was wounded but lived through his captivity. Other portions of the attack went astray and on the whole the operation was unsuccessful.

The Divisional historian writes: "It is only fair to the 19th Division to record the fact that the Divisional Commander from the first strenuously opposed the plan, both at Corps and Army Headquarters. The whole trench system held by the Division was a quagmire and men arrived exhausted in the front line and were in no state to attack. But more important still the artillery had to fire over a steep hill and form a barrage on the downward slopes, the efficacy of which was more than doubtful. At the corps conference the General Officer Commanding predicted the failure of this portion of the attack owing to these conditions and asked that the attack should be only in the nature of a demonstration."

None of the tanks allotted to the 19th Division could get as far as our own front line. The ground indeed was so bad that when operations were finally suspended for the winter the line had to be drawn back a thousand yards.

Major-General Sir G. D. Jeffreys, who at that time commanded the 57th Brigade, wrote: "The conditions then were, I think, the worst I ever remember in the war. The shell fire was continuous, the ground a mass of slimy mud which, in such trenches as there were, was up to and sometimes above men's knees. There were shell craters full of water in which a man could easily be drowned. Yet with it all, somehow or other, the men managed to keep up an extraordinary good spirit and put up with hardships, dangers and the filth in a spirit which was very different from that which is sometimes described in some, to my mind, very bad war books that have appeared. What was unfortunate was that the Army Commander and the personnel of Army Headquarters could not realize the state of affairs in the front line and the exhaustion which was produced in merely staying in the line under conditions of ground and weather, well-nigh intolerable. If they had been able to realize it, I feel that the attack of the 17th November would never have been ordered."

The Army Commander took me to task for this failure, and suggested scapegoats, but I was unable to offer any except myself.

So ended the Battle of the Somme, the passing of the New Army as Mons had been the grave of the old. Three times had my Division been renewed and fresh faces met one on every side, but they lacked the cheerful eager look of the volunteer. We never had the same gallant adventurers in the ranks again. They were splendid soldiers.

They got few honours, little glory and often just six feet of France to lie in. But in their cheerful philosophy these worthy successors of the Men of Agincourt asked no more.

The winter of 1916-17 was very severe, but frost on the whole improved the conditions for one could get over the top of the ground. A good deal of snow fell and we carried out trench raids at night in a kind of Ku Klux Klan white overall. In March the Germans successfully retired under cover of fog to their "Siegfried" (or Hindenburg) line thus considerably economizing their forces. The intermediate country was systematically devastated beforehand, roads and villages destroyed and wells rendered useless. Various land mines and ingenious booby-traps were left behind to amuse us. Amongst these I remember books left on a table or a loose brick on the floor, the touching of which meant an explosion. The Royal Engineers were kept busy searching out these practical jokes. The code-word for this withdrawal was "Alberich" (the malignant dwarf of the Niebelung Ring).

The general outlook was now gloomy to a degree. Nothing seemed to go right on land or sea. With stalemate after enormous losses in the West, failure against the Turks, inability to join hands with our now very shaky Allies, the Russians, defeat of Serbia and Roumania, command of the sea almost wrested from us by the submarine campaign, the iron dice seemed to be loaded against us. I began to say my prayers in German.

March 1917 found the Division back in the 2nd Army. Not long after our arrival in his area General Plumer came to see me and had tea in the mess. This was a habit of his which made contact much easier. He said that he had had a letter from General Gough stating that he did not consider the Division was in a good state. This was to us

like impugning the chastity of Cæsar's wife. I recounted to the Army Commander what the Division had done, our heavy casualties, our tardy reinforcements and my own differences with Gough. Army Commanders should not expect from New Army divisions the same consistent performances that were registered by Guards, Canadians and Australians, who were kept up to strength and had pools of their own reinforcements to draw from. We wanted a little more time to get into trim, but the fighting spirit of the Division was unimpaired, as he would see when we were put to the test. General Plumer was satisfied, and later had every reason to be so as in his next battle, the capture of Messines and Whyteschaete, the Division carried all its objectives brilliantly.

It was for this affair that we now prepared, an attack on a commanding position fortified at leisure by the Germans during the previous two years. The frontage of our attack was between nine and ten miles, and at the moment of the assault nineteen deep mines of over a million pounds of explosives were to be ignited beneath the enemy's trenches, an unparalleled feat of land mining. More than once had General Plumer been on the eve of this attack and each time the troops had been taken from him and sent somewhere else. There were those who wished to explode the mines on the ground that they would deteriorate and become useless, but the Army Commander steadfastly refused and adhered to his original plan, waiting patiently until sufficient troops could be spared. Plumer was the Cinderella of the Army Commanders and the Ypres Salient was his unsavoury kitchen. Not many of the good things in warlike equipment came his way, and his trenches were generally manned by the tired troops of divisions that had been bled white else-

where. But I doubt if he ever complained, and for my part I would sooner have had him behind me than any other Army Commander I had been with, for he was intrinsically sound and as loyal to his subordinates as he was to those above him. He had a first-rate staff under Tim Harrington, and all his arrangements worked like the clock.

Divisional operation orders for this attack covered innumerable sheets of foolscap. Compared with those of 1914 they were whole volumes. For the staging of a battle in 1917 required an extraordinary amount of thought and care. Every unit had its place in the scheme, various objectives had to be attacked in different ways, artillery barrage maps made and orders for the gunners, signallers, machine-gunners, Royal Engineers, Pioneers, Field Ambulances and all the administrative services carefully worked out in detail. Nothing could be left to chance in the original plan, though much had to be left to initiative once battle was joined. No doubt the Germans had to do the same, for the science of killing each other had become a very complicated business entailing much paper and ink and hard work far into the night for the General and his staff. I never saw a game of bridge played in a divisional headquarters throughout the war except occasionally when back in rest billets and even then we were generally busy with schemes of training or plans for some future devilry.

My headquarters were then in dug-outs in the Scherpenberg Hill, a prominent point where distinguished visitors could come and actually see shells bursting. Such callers were frequent, and they often dropped in for refreshments. Mr. Asquith came one day but his climb to the hill-top was interrupted by meeting Poilu face to face. "I may be wrong," he said, "but did I see a lion in the path?"

CHAPTER IX

YPRES TO WASHINGTON

"To be prepared for War is one of the most effectual means of preserving Peace."—George Washington.—Speech to both Houses of Congress, 8th January, 1790.

CHAPTER IX

ARRANGEMENTS for the offensive were well advanced when I suddenly got an order to pack up and report in London. I had not the vaguest idea what it was about and was somewhat sore at being removed at such a busy time on the eve of a big attack. It was revealed that I was to go to Washington with Mr. Arthur Balfour to welcome the United States into the war, give her the benefit of our experiences and make arrangements for her co-operation. The mission included Admiral de Chair, Eric Drummond, the Chief's private secretary, Ian Malcolm representing the Red Cross, and various technical experts. One of my staff in France, Major R. Spender-Clay, a brother-in-law of Lord Astor, accompanied me. Meanwhile my Division was taken over by General Cameron Shute.

The German submarine campaign was now at its height and sinkings in April 1917 totalled nearly a million tons of shipping, of which 60 per cent were British. Most of this activity was centred round the Irish coast which had become a marine graveyard and it was expected that special efforts would be made by the U-boat Commanders to sink our outfit. With the fate of Kitchener's mission to Russia fresh in mind the Admiralty were doubly nervous. Special measures of secrecy were adopted and so successful were they that we could not locate the ship on which we were to sail. We headed for the Clyde and were stopped for the night at the Station Hotel at Dumfries under the seal of secrecy, but this incognito was exposed

by our genial chief in person, who gave his autograph to the lift-boy. The evening of the next day we discovered the *Olympic* in the Mersey and went on board. It was a real dirty evening. Someone mentioned torpedoes, but A.J.B. dressed in his Gieves life-saving suit, feet on the stove, book (philosophy, no doubt) in hand, said he would as soon be torpedoed as speak at the Pilgrims' Dinner—a function at which he had been billed to appear that evening. I believe his understudy made a good hit when he let out for the first time that A.J.B. was on the high seas already well on his way to the United States.

Our arrival at Washington was the occasion of genuine rejoicing. The French Mission headed by M. Viviani, the Premier, and Marshal Joffre, which arrived a few days later, received an even greater ovation, but were somewhat handicapped by their ignorance of the language. Viviani's efforts gained great applause, not because many people could understand what he said but because he was an impassioned orator and talked faster and louder than anyone else, while Joffre's one English speech "I lof America," went well, but in conference they were in the hands of interpreters. The British Delegation was lent a big house in South Street, belonging to Mr. Breckenridge Long, complete with servants and made very comfortable. I was allotted a prince of aides-de-camp in Major John Quekmeyer, a cavalryman from sceptical Missouri, whose chief object seemed to be to protect me from being bored.

Arthur Balfour was a success from the first. The soul of tact and dignity and an excellent speaker of a quiet type, he captured the country. Blessed with a careless easy grace which concealed deep culture and wide experience, he was a *rara avis*, and people flocked to see and hear him. I doubt if many realized the difficulties that

lay in his path. Financially we were now in a bad way and it was necessary for America to take up the burden. It was the American dollar that first turned the tide. Then the Irish question supported by Tammany and the great Irish-American population that sprang from the "hungry forties" raised its Hydra head against us in the Press and by leaflets. The iniquity of the Allies too, in making secret treaties had to be revealed to the President. It fell to our Chief to deal with these and other difficult and thorny matters, and he just sailed over them. I doubt if his long and varied career could show such another record of successful achievement. He loved the job and took to the life like a duck to water. Even the cocktails. Whenever we were leaving the house for some function the well-trained butler would appear as if by magic with a tray of cocktails. "A most pernicious habit," our chief would say, frowning at them, "but I suppose we must conform," and down it would go.

The expansion of the American Army was the question of the day, and we arrived to find Congress and Senate sharply divided on the question of voluntary service or compulsion. The Speaker, the Hon. Champ Clark, during a debate on the subject, had classed conscripts with convicts. But the French and ourselves agreed that it was vitally important not only for the conduct of the war but also for the future good of America that the burden should be shared by all. I was asked to speak on the subject to representatives of the Press. I told them how bitterly we regretted not having had compulsion at the beginning of the war, of the inequality of the burden, of the scything down of all the best of the nation who volunteered first, the wiping out of what was really the officer class and the survival of the less patriotic and the

shirkers who remained at home to get the jobs of the volunteers. I predicted that a voluntary army would prove inadequate and pointed out the heaven-sent opportunity to weld America's mixed population into a homogeneous whole.

When all this appeared in next morning's newspapers people held their breath, and some of my colleagues said, "Now you have done it." Spectres rose of anti-British speeches in Congress, denouncing such interference with the prerogatives of the Legislature, and so on; for the one thing we had been warned to avoid was giving advice. However, the Press realized that I had only talked horse-sense and characterized me as a bluff soldier who did not know how to mince his words. I was asked to address the Committee of the Senate on the same subject, which I did.

In the meantime ex-President Roosevelt, a power in the land, had been making preparations for a voluntary army, and Mr. Balfour sent me to Oyster Bay to wrestle with him. I found the great exponent of the strenuous life cutting down a tree. We had a long talk in the garden at Sagamore Hill before lunch, and he asked me all the questions which I had expected President Wilson to ask. After lunch he showed me a pile of letters and telegrams. I read some of them and they were great tributes to his personality and the loyalty of his friends. "Coming when you say with a thousand men." Such was the gist of them and they represented, he said, a hundred thousand men who would join when he lifted a finger. The bulk of them were the Irish with whom he was immensely popular. But he had already read my arguments in the Press, and after talking it over came round to the point of view that this was a war of millions and a national war and

every citizen must play his appointed part. Being a big and generous man he wrote an article to the Press favouring conscription.

Roosevelt did not really object to compulsory service, indeed, he had advocated it in 1914. Had he been President at that time, it is interesting to speculate as to the course of events. Being as hasty in action as Wilson was deliberate, I am inclined to think he might have brought his country into the war prematurely, and found much trouble at home. On the other hand he would have prepared, and half a million trained men in America, ready to cross the Atlantic in 1917, would have been of enormous value. At this time he was burning with ardour to raise a division and to take it overseas with himself in command or in some subordinate capacity. This his experience and energy qualified him to do, but the administration refused to consider the matter, holding that all volunteering impulse was to be discouraged. I do not know whether politics influenced this decision. A successful Roosevelt rising to be commander-in-chief and a national hero might have been an embarrassment to the Government. He had to content himself with writing to Pershing and asking him to take his two sons to France with the first contingent as privates.

We talked of other matters and he showed me some interesting photos of himself and the Kaiser garnished with bombastic remarks by the latter. I told him I had always admired him for two big things he had done during his administration, the cutting of the Panama Canal and the sending of the American Fleet round the world at a difficult time. I asked him whether in the latter enterprise, the Admiral in command had had a free hand or whether he was tied to Washington. "I believe in initi-

ative," he said, "it makes a nation. I only gave the Admiral one instruction when I said good-bye to him. 'Evans,' I said, 'if you get caught napping, don't come back.' "

Congress passed the Draft Law at once. Conscription in America! It sounded to many like a fairy tale, yet where are the people who will not follow resolute leadership in an emergency? Would not the British public have done the same in 1914 if the issue had been put before it?

I dined that night in New York alone with Colonel House and talked matters over with him. He was a sane man and "the earhole," as he expressed it, of Woodrow Wilson. "I will tell the President what you say," he would remark, "but I do not know what his reaction will be." Probably no one did unless it were his Irish-American secretary, Tumulty. The Colonel was a dapper quiet little man and not at all the Texan desperado I expected. But then as he said himself, the real killers are generally polite, mild-mannered and even delicate men. He was of the greatest assistance to our Mission and to the cause of the Allies and had already paved the way for us by his contacts, especially with Sir E. Grey and Sir Eric Drummond. He had been in Germany in 1914 and realized that war was inevitable and he had urged the President to prepare for it without avail. This very defencelessness was a prime factor in the forcing of America into the war. *Si vis pacem. . .* The Colonel's one great fear was lest we should have a real quarrel. We did things in Great Britain and especially at sea, in the holding up of American cargoes, that were most unpopular in the United States (though not comparable with the piratical procedure of America when she took charge of the high seas at a later date!). On the other hand, America's actions to us were sometimes quite unaccount-

able. "Let nothing keep us apart," said the Colonel, "cable if there is the slightest misunderstanding and I will put it right." There was one disadvantage to Colonel House as a medium. He scarcely ever came to Washington and in summer lived on the North Shore, a day's journey.

The figure of Woodrow Wilson has passed into legend to await the verdict of history. There is no doubt that he increases in stature with the years. Typical New-Englander, tall, lantern-jawed, immaculate and precise in mind and body, he was anti-imperialist and inclined to regard all European belligerents as a pack of naughty children. A.J.B. got on famously with him. They both professed a weakness for crime novels and whether their long and animated discussions were of world politics or metaphysics or perhaps of the respective merits of *Murder in the Manse* or *The Second Blood-stain*, history does not tell us. J. H. Thomas also found common ground with the President and was *persona grata* at the White House. On the other hand neither Admiral de Chair nor I could make any headway with him. He would talk to me of American labour problems, railways and even golf, but of war, not a word, and the hundred and one questions to which I had prepared answers remained unasked. I ascribed this to a species of vanity which would not allow him to enter upon a subject of which he had not the mastery. It was possible also that he left military things strictly to his own men of war, and that to keep face with them as well as with his pacifist constituency he did not wish to appear influenced by a British militarist.

His inaccessibility was unfortunate as many questions of organization and detail which with us would have been dealt with by the Secretary for War or Chief of the General Staff, in the United States were reserved for

President and Congress. But he had the reputation of being a bitter fighter and his friends said that Germany would rue the day that he entered the war, and he would never sheath the sword until the uttermost farthing of reparation had been extorted from the Central Powers.

By comparison the President stood out in strong relief from a background of rather weak sisters which formed his entourage. The Secretary of State was but an experienced official, while Baker, the Secretary of War, an electoral ally of the President's, a provincial attorney, shrewd but narrow, was of pacifist tendencies and a hater of bloodshed. I do not know whether he grew out of this. MacAdoo at the Treasury had married the President's daughter. Of Josephus Daniels at the Navy Department, one heard little, though his assistant, Franklin Roosevelt, was very able, immensely helpful and universally popular, a man of sterling character and great will-power, which later forced him to the front to lead his country through a time of crisis. Behind these were the brains of the nation in a hundred forms ready to give unstintingly of their best and soon to be called upon to do so.

My first public appearance in the United States was rather alarming. The Chief, billed to speak at the Waldorf, New York, to the members of the Association of American Newspapers, acquired a sore throat and detailed me to act for him. I would as soon have gone over the top, but in either case, orders were orders. So Spender-Clay and I took the afternoon train for New York. We were met by Colonel Vanderbilt and the red carpet and Mr. Dudley Field Malone representing the Mayor. The latter's welcome to me on alighting was typical of his play-boy attitude towards affairs. "General," he said, "this is the little old city of New York and every-

thing in it is yours, from the most beautiful woman you see down to a dime novel."

At the banquet I sat next to John Purroy Mitchel, the Mayor, a strong and attractive personality. His grandfather, John Mitchel, editor of the *Nation* in Dublin, was convicted of sedition in 1848 and transported under a long sentence, first to Capetown, then Bermuda, and then to Tasmania. Here his wife and children were allowed to join him and they lived outside the jail with one Daniel Burke, in a solid convict-built stone house which I visited out of curiosity in 1925. Mitchel was eventually smuggled over to Sydney disguised as a priest and thence escaped to America. His sons fought for the South in the Civil War, and here was John Purroy Mitchel, son and grandson of a rebel, staunch American patriot and firm friend of the Allied cause, and it was said the best Mayor New York had ever had. He was one of those who had already done a course at Plattsburgh Camp to qualify as an officer, and he had marked qualities of leadership. I made efforts later to get him command of one of the New York Regiments, but the President would not hear of it. The Army lost a good man for Mitchel went into the Flying Corps and was killed in training. A year later I walked in his funeral procession with Theodore Roosevelt who was one of his greatest friends.

The other guest at this banquet was James Gerard, the United States Ambassador from Berlin, who had many interesting things to say. When he talked of the possibility of conscription in America, German officials had laughed in his face. Its achievement would come as a severe shock to their *moral*. He told me that Germany believed that President Wilson had been elected with a mandate to keep the country out of war and that the

United States would put up with any indignities rather than fight.

It was only when I rose to speak that evening that I realized that our Mission to the United States had provided a welcome occasion for the release of strong patriotic and pro-Ally feeling that had been held in check for two and a half years. At the sight of a khaki uniform everyone rose and waved napkins and cheered, and the band played a song from "Pinafore," "In spite of all temptations to belong to other nations he remains an Englishman," which sometimes did duty for our National Anthem.

I based my discourse on the good old military maxim, "March to the sound of the guns." Malone had said, "Just speak to that girl in the gallery," but I need not have worried about composing a speech. Whatever I said went with a swing and as we had supplied the Press with a copy before the dinner it looked all right in the papers next day, and the Chief was pleased, half anticipating, I think, that I might have blotted the family copybook.

Spender-Clay and I finished the evening at the Yale Club with more talking, more enthusiasm and some beer, in company with General Leonard Wood and Malone. We heard some good speeches, especially Malone's account of his capture of the German Fleet. He was Collector of the Port and had had to lay hands on all German vessels as soon as the United States declared war. Malone, thanks to the American school-books of the day, had grown up hating the wicked English. A visit to England, however, had done much to modify his views. Losing his way once in London he was escorted back to his lodgings in a lonely street on a dark night by a stranger. Arriving at his house he buttoned up his pockets and prepared to sell his life dearly, when to his surprise the

stranger said, "Well, you're all right now, good night," and disappeared.

Dudley Malone was a lawyer by trade and the advocate of the American suffragettes. Later he settled in Paris and conducted a large business in divorce. I went to his wedding in London and the late Will Rogers, responding on behalf of the bridegroom at luncheon, addressed the guests as "Friends and Clients."

A few days later the British and French Missions made a visit to New York, for which Mr. Vincent Astor kindly lent us his house on 5th Avenue. Our reception was terrific. Much talking in which our Chief held his own well. He and I as well as Viviani and Joffre were presented with a heavy gold medal of fine design. The Mayor kept a replica in bronze. The procession through the city was memorable. Every house from the Battery to the Bronx was beflagged and there was a band to every block. The festivities closed with a big banquet at the Waldorf Astoria. Amongst the guests were Theodore Roosevelt and Taft, ex-Presidents, as well as Joseph Choate, who represented the city. Viviani spoke in French. Everyone said the right (and generally the same) thing in different phrases. Some were better received than others (as always the words seemed to matter a great deal to the audience). But the enthusiasm of our new allies was obviously a strong force and with an anxious eye on the situation in Europe we wanted to turn it to account and to get a move on with the practical work of the Mission.

While all members of the Mission carefully refrained from offering advice to the various departments, there was a good deal of divergence of opinion as to how the full weight of the United States was to make itself felt. From our point of view we wanted:

- (a) To show the flag as soon as possible on land and sea. The dispatch of a division to France and of all available destroyers to Ireland would meet this.
- (b) To fill up the ranks on the battle front. French numbers were now on the decline, our own could not be expected to increase and, with Russia weakening and soon perhaps to be discounted, a German supremacy in the West might be expected.

We therefore wished to draw on the unlimited man-power of the United States as speedily as possible. To this end we favoured the sending over of half-trained men to complete their training in England and France and to be brigaded as battalions with the allied troops. This would utilize the full value of the highly expert and experienced staffs of the Allies. There was a strong prevalent opinion that American troops should be trained only by the French and brigaded with them, which I labelled the "Lafayette motif." So we contented ourselves with offering immediate training facilities for 100,000 men in England, besides whatever might be desired in France. It seemed that the United States with our shipping at her disposal should be able to put the equivalent of six divisions into the field on the Western Front by Christmas 1917. Everyone seemed optimistic about this, but performances fell far short of expectancy, and at the end of the year there was still only one American division in the battle line.

The introduction of another type of rifle into France was then unimportant as that weapon played an insignificant part in trench warfare, but we foresaw difficulties about guns, the United States Army preferring its own patterns whilst our object was to try and limit armaments to those types already existing at the front in order to

simplify manufacture and supply of ammunition and to save time. I was asked to advise as to how the weight of the United States could be best and most quickly applied, and wrote a paper on the subject, but no one ever seems to profit by the experience of others and it took the American authorities about a year of trial and error in this field before they returned to the lines we had suggested.

The Air Service was particularly backward. At this time the United States Army boasted only thirty-five officers who could fly, and fifty-five 'planes, mostly obsolete, and the French Government startled Washington with a demand for the formation of a Flying Corps of 4,500 machines, complete with personnel (5,000 pilots and 50,000 mechanics) for the spring campaign of 1918. Although Congress made an appropriation of 640 million dollars for the purpose the difficulties of production were never to be overcome, nor was a single American-designed 'plane destined to fly in France before the end of the war.

We had already 20,000 to 30,000 Americans in our ranks, and A.J.B. suggested that men over the draft age should be allowed to enlist in the French or British armies. But the Secretary for War, Mr. Newton Baker, discountenanced all volunteering, chiefly on the grounds that it might dislocate work in the factories. We did, however, get Congress to pass an Act permitting the compulsory recruiting of Allied subjects resident in the United States, of whom there were a large number. Through the Press I issued an appeal to the British to come forward before they were fetched and reminded them that the Law of Nations does not recognize a man without a country. We established a recruiting mission in New York which was to have branches throughout the country.

In this respect an extraordinary situation later arose. Compulsory enlistment had been introduced in America and generally throughout the British Empire, with two notable exceptions, Ireland and Australia. America was full of Irishmen who could not be conscripted by the Americans or ourselves. There were also a considerable number of Australians who could not be touched. On the other hand, a great many Canadians always resident, and who had crossed the frontier since the beginning of the war, could be and were called to the Colours by the Americans if they did not join their own contingents.

We had been for some time very short in the medical services and Lord Derby (then Secretary of State for War) had asked me to make an appeal for volunteers. This was promptly answered in the most gratifying way by Dr. Martin, of the Defence Committee, with an immediate offer of 1,000 doctors and 500 nurses for the British Army in France or England. They would wear United States uniform and be paid by the United States Government. This was at once sanctioned by General Gorgas, the Surgeon-General, famous for having routed the *stegomyia* mosquito and cleaned up the Panama Canal Zone, and by the Secretary for War. A similar favourable response was made to our request for railway and lumber companies. These were only a few of many instances of the way in which our needs were met with generous and whole-hearted response.

Outside these matters our spare time was filled up with conferences at the War College and I gave a series of lectures on the mounting of a modern battle, to try and show the officers of the General Staff what they would shortly be up against. Other members of the Mission held conferences on their own subjects. But in spite of

observers in France, and circulated information, the Americans had much leeway to make up.

While in New York I went to see Mr. Bernard Baruch, of whose latent power I was persuaded. He was said to be a wizard in finance and to enjoy the President's confidence. In business he was a mystery man, with an office in Wall Street, where he said he kept nothing but a box of cigars, but he was capable of financing the wheat crop. Of Portuguese descent and a fine type of the aristocracy of Judea, he was a man of impressive appearance and acute intelligence, imaginative and courageous. His attitude towards the war had been contemplative and speculative. I believe it was after our conversation that he decided to take an active part. He enlisted as one of the President's "Dollar-a-Year" men, and I was not surprised to see him before long Head of the War Industries Board, which meant virtually Dictator of Raw Material to all the Allies.

The numerous and powerful German-Jew section had naturally been obstructive and hostile, with the notable exception of Mr. Otto Kahn, who was a good and most useful friend to the Allies.

Of a different type of Influential Person was Billy Sunday, the stunt preacher whom Bertie Spender-Clay and I went out into the country to see. He was a reformed baseball player who touched an enormous public, preaching to 30,000 people a day in his specially constructed tabernacles. The war enthusiasm of Washington and New York could scarcely be said to have spread to the Middle West and West, or to have infected the hostile Germans or the large amorphous mass of aliens in the country, and no means of reaching the people who were to supply the man-power could be neglected. Mr. and

Mrs. Sunday entertained us in their little house and then Mr. Sunday said, "Come up to Ma's bedroom and have a chat." We sat on Ma's bed, he with his arm round my neck and had a heart-to-heart talk on Religion and the Soldier. I gave him an account of the Church and the padres at the front and what we expected of them, and pointed out how much good he might do for the young men going to fight for their country. Then we discussed the genesis of the war and I was able to give him some facts of which he had never heard and some fresh material for sermons. I stressed his powers of raising enthusiasm and hoped they would be used to the full in the cause of Righteousness against the Powers of Darkness. We parted good friends and I heard afterwards that he did vigorous work for the cause. Back in New York we were surprised to find a report of the interview in the evening papers, which was quick work on the part of the news-hawks. So accurate and verbatim was the account of the conversation that we were convinced that either there was a reporter under Ma's bed, or that Mr. Sunday had a dictaphone handy for his moments of inspiration. However, there was no harm done and the more people who heard our point of view the better.

A visit to West Point provided a refreshing tonic—I had twice been there before, but it gave me a thrill to inspect such a smart battalion faultlessly turned out in the picturesque British style of a century earlier, shakos, grey coatees and white ducks. Great enthusiasm in the Columbia Hall where I addressed the boys on the "Field-Marshal's baton in the knapsack."

Richmond, Virginia, capital of the Confederacy and rich in the traditions of Cavalier days, welcomed us with nineteen guns and massed singing of National Anthems.

A.J.B. was at his best, and made an excellent speech at the historic executive mansion amidst the portraits of many Royal governors. I think he had not much head for dull figures and would allude to the United States as "this great country of a hundred thousand inhabitants," in spite of tugs at his coat-tails from his *fidus Achates*, the ever-watchful Ian Malcolm. Statistics left him cold. Perched on the summit of the Woolworth Building in New York, listening to the staggering details of its construction, it was only when the guide mentioned that it was non-inflammable that he was driven to ejaculate, "What a pity!"

I went round and placed wreaths in the name of the British Army on the graves of Lee, Stonewall Jackson and Jeb Stuart. This inspired Malcolm, the Mission poet, to write some verses beginning,

"Jonquils for Jackson, Lilac for Lee."

At luncheon I was interested in two ancients talking across the table about something that happened "before the war." They were not alluding to the skirmish going on in Europe but to the Civil War of '62, which was the only war as far as they were concerned. There was something lethargic in the atmosphere and my diary records "reception at Richmond phlegmatic."

On 29th April, Washington's birthday, the French and ourselves were invited aboard the President's yacht, *Mayflower*, to visit Mount Vernon. Here Viviani made an eloquent speech, and Balfour cleverly agreed with him, while Joffre and I placed wreaths on the great man's tomb. It was a very hot day and the *Mayflower* was "dry," but we came back by train and after a couple of mint-juleps and a surfeit of George Washington, I was able to

tell the people in my carriage things about him of which they had never heard. That he tried to join the British Navy, but his mother would not let him, that he was a Cornet in the 7th Hussars, that he once wrote in his diary, "No man is married a hundred miles from home," and that he had shares in the Bank of England. This provided a lively discussion that continued until we reached Washington, and for some days afterwards.

Before the Mission left the capital there were already signs that things were hanging fire owing to differences of opinion in high places. I urged the Secretary of State for War to speed up the re-organization and expansion of the General Staff and to secure adequate accommodation for it. This was supported by General Tasker H. Bliss, Assistant Chief of the General Staff, an able and understanding officer, destined to succeed General Scott and to hold a high position at Versailles until the signing of the Peace Treaty. Mr. Baker promised to give particular consideration to our views as to the sending over of untrained or partially trained men and the desirability of refraining from introducing new types of guns into France. General Kuhn, our stand-by at the War Office, was now able to give us a definite statement of where we stood. General Pershing was to leave shortly for France followed by an Expeditionary Force of 18,000 men composed of infantry and marines, and 12 regiments of artillery; 10,000 infantrymen would be available for reinforcements. By the end of July, it was expected that 600,000 men of the United States Army and National Guard would be available, while conscripted men would be coming in by 1st September.

Passing through New York, I found Colonel House more alive than Washington to the dangers of the man-power situation of the Allies if things should get worse in

Russia. In such a case, he agreed men should be sent over whenever there was shipping accommodation. He would point this out to the President. He was anxious to have all cards put on the table as regards inventions, especially naval, in order to give American genius for invention a fair start. I had my doubts about the advisability of this, as according to our Secret Service the country was known to be full of spies, but referred him to Admiral de Chair. Finally House gave the solemn assurance that the United States meant business and would fight to a finish, and that, as Lord Grey knew, she would have come into the war earlier if there had been a chance of the Allies being beaten by the Germans.

Nevertheless there was no doubt that alien forces, cleverly directed, were working against us, and we had little with which to combat them. Our Ambassador, Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, had been practically denied the White House, so sensitive had the President become lest he should seem to have been bullied into the war by the British. Apparently abandoned by his own Government, the penalty perhaps of being a poet, Spring-Rice was superseded by Lord Reading. Of Spring-Rice it could be said that his work had been too delicate to be advertised as history, but nevertheless the eternal fact remains that America came into the war under his Ambassadorship. He died shortly afterwards a veritable victim of the war, leaving us a very beautiful hymn, "I vow to thee, my Country, all earthly things above," which was sung at the funeral service of King George V. We were fortunate in having in Sir William Wiseman a very able intelligence officer who was liked and trusted by both the President and Colonel House, and in a position to keep touch with a very difficult and constantly changing situation.

And so to Montreal, where A.J.B., the Admiral and myself were honoured with degrees at McGill University, and a short visit to the Governor-General, the Duke of Devonshire, at Ottawa. I had several matters to discuss with Sir R. Borden and General Gwatkin, the Chief of the Staff, notably the release of the 5th Canadian Division, which our War Office was very anxious should be dispatched to France, and the question of offering training-camps and instructors to the United States which would be a graceful act and would probably be accepted for the Polish contingent, the raising of which we had discussed in Washington with Paderewski and which it was understood the President would sanction.

We sailed for home on 3rd June, leaving behind, at the request of the administration, three of our members, Langhorne, Goodwin and Rees, representing artillery, medical services and aviation. Group-Captain Lionel Rees, V. C. I met again in a curious fashion a couple of years ago. I happened to be on the Island of St. Lucia, on the Morne Fortuné (where much good British blood has been spilt) and saw a pretty little yawl come into Castries harbour. The next day I rowed over to look at her. She was the *May*, and flew a Welsh burgee, and out of the cabin popped the blistered face of Rees. He had sailed his little 9½-ton craft out from England for the second time, and meant to go round the world. He would not come ashore and dine, he had cracked lips, and "people asked so many questions." The doctors had given him the choice between a mountain in Switzerland or the sea and the sea had been kind to him. Somehow, he had dodged the publicity which attends larger and more expensive ships when they come through a blow and he made light of his six weeks' voyage. He took on some

bananas and fresh water and next evening I saw him ramping along with the strong north-east Trade abeam heading for Port of Spain, Trinidad, to refit. On board the *Olympic* we took with us an advanced guard of several United States officers, and held daily conferences with them during the voyage. Their appetite for war experiences was unbounded and their anxiety lest the war should suddenly come to an end and leave them unblooded was a source of continual amusement to us.

Believing as I always have that the key-note of our world policy should be to stand shoulder to shoulder with our cousins across the Atlantic, I was well satisfied with the results of this mission. I was confident that the United States could and would put a big army in the field, but could foresee difficulties and delays in high places, especially amongst the senior officers, some of whom were naturally hampered by their training and still thought in terms of the covered wagon and the stockade which made it hard for them to visualize the rapid expansion of an army of 100,000 to 3,000,000 men for a Continental war. This and the shipping were likely to form the neck of the bottle. It was a comfort to remember that in spite of America's mixed population, the guidance of her foreign policy was in the hands of men of Anglo-Saxon stock and likely to remain so.

I have happy recollections of the good old *Olympic* and her commander, Commodore Bertram Hayes, and was glad A.J.B. secured him a knighthood, as a compliment to the merchant service in general for their splendid work in the war. He had ferried over some half-million Canadians without incident and when asked the secret of his success would say, "locking up my wireless and disregarding all Admiralty directions." But he confided

to me that he always saved enough good Cardiff in his bunkers to run through the danger zone off the Irish coast at 22 knots, in those days a high speed. He received the D.S.O. later for ramming and sinking a U-boat, a fine achievement for a 40,000-ton liner.

Off the Irish coast we were met and escorted in by four American destroyers, quick work on the part of the United States Navy, and a welcome gesture of co-operation.

CHAPTER X

PASSCHENDAELE AND WASHINGTON

"Our armies swore terribly in Flanders (cried my Uncle Toby) but nothing to this,"—*Tristram Shandy*.

CHAPTER X

RETURN TO FLANDERS (1917)

BY the time we reached home the matter of American reinforcements had become urgent, for the French, after their costly failures in April and May 1917 and subsequent indiscipline could not for the time be relied on. Nivelle indeed having been clean bowled first ball, Pétain now came in with the avowed intention of playing out time until the Americans should arrive. The French were incapable of another offensive and our preoccupation was to keep them in the field.

London was being handsomely "strafed," and as I passed through spending the night at our house in Chesham Street, one of the largest bombs fell outside the Russian Embassy at dinner-time. It made a hole you could have buried a horse and cart in and broke a lot of windows. Our gas exploded and the cook was blown across the kitchen, but never let go of the omelette. In a way one was not sorry to see the war coming to London, as a reminder that there were 500,000 men in Government employment, a large proportion of whom, it was said, should have been at the front. For this as will be shown later, we had to suffer on my second visit to America. The Government, however, shirked sending them, nor would they conscript Ireland, but combed out all the convalescents instead. It was now not unusual to find men in the ranks who had been wounded two or three times. I questioned one hero with three wound stripes who had

rejoined the infantry. He said "Quite all right, sir, as long as I haven't got to walk far."

Our War Cabinet was going through a pessimistic period, and had now slight hopes of victory. They expected little help from the United States of America for a year. Henry Wilson I met in London (of all people on half-pay at the critical period of the war!) and he made my flesh creep. I was glad to get back to my "funk-hole" on the Scherpenberg and to take over the 19th Division again where at least everyone was cheerful and to mount a fresh attack for the end of July under Plumer. This strictly limited offensive like most of our "bite and hold" attacks, was a complete success, though rain stopped further advance. In response to a query of Lloyd George as to whether the men and junior officers were not heartily sick of the war, I was able to write that I could see no sign of it and that as far as the 19th Division went it was in better heart than when I left it in April.

This was the beginning of the big offensive for the Passchendaele Ridge, or as Foch called it "Haig's duck-march to Ostend," for which the Army had long been preparing. The intention was to disengage Lille or Ostend, or both. I could not but reflect somewhat grimly that I was now taking part in the greatest battle of modern times for ground, the capture of which we had urged and planned two years earlier when it could have been effected with only a moderate sacrifice.

I doubt if there was a Divisional Commander in favour of this attack. It was already late in the year for Flanders and there had been heavy summer rains and with the bombardment there came as usual more rain to which Flanders is peculiarly liable and Napoleon's 5th Element, Mud, was to contribute largely to our discomfiture. On

the other hand the Army was in great heart and efficiency and put in somewhere on dry land would have taken a deal of stopping and have been of more use to the French for whose benefit it was afterwards said this attack was chiefly planned.

Winston Churchill dined with me the evening before the advance of 22nd September, and wanted to stay the night and see the show, but Army Headquarters rather naturally objected. Had he done so, he would certainly have been involved in the next day's happenings. Actually that day was fine and the first phase of the attack on a long front, both British and French, was completely successful. We took 5,000 prisoners. My own division by 3 p.m. was reported to be on all its objectives. The enemy's counter-barrage being very heavy, the telephone wires were continually cut and getting no clear reports of the situation I set out for Brigade Headquarters, my aide-de-camp, Nettlefold, carrying a couple of bottles of champagne for the brigadiers. We found my old friend Tom Cubitt of the 57th safely ensconced in the dug-outs of Hill 60 and were glad to join him as it was raining old iron. German barrages at that time instead of being of gentlemanly 4.7 and 6-inch howitzers, were of 11-inch and the shells had a widely destructive lateral burst.

As the situation of both brigades was satisfactory we renounced the idea of visiting General Glasgow of the 58th and waited for a lull in the shelling to get home. But no lull came and as it was getting late, and I had a restive Corps Commander somewhere behind who would be wanting to know what I was doing, we decided to chance it. We had gone about fifty yards when remembering that Cubitt was a thirsty soul, I sent Nettlefold back to tell him that if he didn't send one bottle of champagne

to his brother brigadier I would skin him alive. A lucky break for the aide-de-camp, for during his short absence a big crump burst near by and shattered my right leg. Help speedily arrived and I was carried down to a dressing-station and temporarily fixed up and then back to the road, a long way for the poor stretcher-bearers with whom I had every sympathy, as it was now dark, very rough going and a heavy strafe in progress. I never before realized what these men had to go through.

Eventually we found an ambulance which bumped us back to my Headquarters, then in the village of Wulveringham. Here I had the luck to be found by a Harley Street surgeon, Gordon Watson, who complete with his dresser and nurse, was prowling round looking for prey, and about midnight I was duly served up to him.

Gordon Watson made a neat job of me, and not wanting to go to England, I spent six weeks at a base hospital in Montreuil, near Boulogne. Nearly everyone I knew in the Army came to see me here, except Douglas Haig. My wife came out for a time, but found me so bad-tempered that she went home again. My next move was to Carlton House Terrace to Lady Ridley's Hospital, where I enjoyed the sight of a really fine air-raid over London. Winston Churchill came to see me here and very kindly offered to find me something to do to keep my mind employed. So after a brief spell at Brighton, where my wife had a house, I took over the Trench Warfare Department of the Ministry of Munitions, actually within three months of the day I was wounded. I found lots of work here, for it was a real live show like everything else Winston had a hand in, and everyone was hard driven.

This brought us up to March 1918, by which time the issue of the war was again in the balance, for Russia's

defection had released about ninety German divisions which were now threatening the Western Front. In addition it had been necessary to detach French and British troops to Italy to succour the Italians, and the French were and had been for many months definitely on the defensive. There was a crisis in high command, a crisis in man-power, and a crisis in shipping for the unlimited U-boat campaign was taking heavy toll. Only war material as I had reason to know, thanks to Winston's dynamic energy was plentiful and new and better tanks which were soon to have a vital influence on the infantry battle were being made in quantities. America still had only four divisions at the front and we now wanted American troops urgently. One could hardly blame the Americans as shipping had been a great difficulty. Troop-ing was continually being interrupted to meet other needs. In January 1918 two million tons of wheat had to be ferried over, and in March there was a crisis in rolling stock and all available vessels had to be diverted to bring over railway engines and trucks. But the sudden and terrific German onslaught against the 5th Army dwarfed all other issues.

On 21st March, 1918, the Germans launched their great offensive. Even to-day few people realize how near to catastrophe for the Allies was the break through on the 5th Army front. Plans were worked out for the embarkation of the British Expeditionary Force should the Germans reach Amiens. The War Council at Versailles, with the statistics of reserves held by both sides in front of them, gave their unqualified opinion that unless additional man-power was made available immediately, Paris must fall and the cause of the Allies suffer a long set-back or worse. Man power to meet the German

invasion was the vital paramount factor and we had by then poured every possible man, cavalry, engineers, gunners, even labour corps, into the widening breach.

One must bear in mind that at this critical moment British Forces were committed to enterprises all over the world and the further from home they were, the more men were required to maintain their lengthy and vulnerable communications. Engaged too on an extensive American armament programme of guns, aeroplanes, munitions, rifles and lorries, already woefully in arrears, it did not appear possible to extract more men from the skilled trades necessary to supply such material. We had already conscripted the whole country from boys of eighteen to men of fifty. France too was bled white, and still suffering from shock. The intensive U-boat campaign was making itself felt in no uncertain fashion. There was only eleven days' food in the country, and for the first time food queues had begun to form in Britain. Finally and probably more dangerous than all to hopes of a decisive victory for the Allies was the fact that Lord Lansdowne had initiated a Peace Campaign.

There was only one place where man-power was still available to us on a large scale, and that was the United States of America.

General Pershing in France was not seeing eye to eye with Generalissimo Foch, and having so far successfully resisted attempts by the French and British to merge his troops into their units rather than to allow them to remain as a separate American entity was suspicious that the crisis was being made to look more serious than it really was in order to force his acquiescence.

To understand Pershing's attitude one must realize that the whole American programme was based on sending

a record-breaking Army equipped with record-breaking weapons to France. America was to make none of the mistakes of her associates and every phase of Allied venture had by now been studied with meticulous thoroughness by her experts. A great base had been organized and prepared at St. Nazaire and the vanguard of the "services of the rear" or lines of communication was already in France, comprising such details as first-class engineer, railway and medical units. Divisions and army troops were to follow complete in every detail. Cantonments were being built and every man was to have his bunk and three blankets. Unfortunately Zero Hour for the great American blow to finish the war and show the world what she could do was timed for about June 1919. Nor was Pershing alone in expecting the war to drag on into that year. He is, however, open to criticism for his neglect to recognize the seriousness of the man-power situation in France and for the continued refusal to suggestions as to the earlier employment of his forces under Allied control pressed on him by the highest authority, French and British. Even to Marshal Foch's repeated requests he turned a deaf ear.

Whilst allowing that the Franco-British scheme was the best and quickest for training his men and officers, Pershing was deeply suspicious of our designs and Germans or no Germans, meant to build up his American Army.

The shipping required to bring over three complete American Divisions of 36 battalions, which could not be fighting for over six months, was the same as that necessary for 150,000 to 200,000 infantry (or 150 battalions) who under our system would be ready in three to four months. Though we would take risks and pinch to ship the latter, we did not feel justified in doing so to transport the former.

Under the stress of continued massed German offensive it was not surprising that the Allied leaders should appeal behind Pershing's back to the President of the United States to send over men with bayonets, regardless of the fact that their training was not yet completed. Some of them had had but six weeks in camp, but being young men of first-class physique, fired with patriotism, and a desire to be "over there" they seemed to the desperate Allied Council the heaven-sent reserve that alone could save the cause. The men were certainly available, but even if President Wilson and Pershing could be persuaded to allow them to come the problem of how to get them to France still remained.

It was at this period of depression and anxiety among the Allies that I was sent for by the Prime Minister and told that he wanted me to go to Washington. I lunched with him alone at Walton Heath, and over a good cut of Welsh mutton, he gave me a *résumé* of the situation and told me what he wanted. Though I was to go out ostensibly to control Military Missions in the United States of America, and as military adviser to Lord Reading, the Ambassador, my real job was tactfully but firmly to bring home to the American Administration the extremely critical nature of the situation and to do my utmost to increase the flow of real bayonets and not administrative troops to Europe. Most important of all, I was to be independent of Lord Reading and if I found things moving too slowly I was to use my own initiative as to how to convince President Wilson of the seriousness of the crisis. Cables had constantly passed on the subject. Lloyd George had asked for 100,000 men a month, the President had promised 120,000, deprecating at the same time the application of conscription to Ireland! This was an early

symptom of Woodrow Wilson's independence of thought and action which later became more pronounced and embarrassed his colleagues during the Peace Conference. But promises were only promises and I was to tell the President that if he could not get over an average of 200,000 bayonets a month in the next three months we should lose the war.

In spite of the way things were going and his enormous responsibilities L.G. looked well. He was in good spirits and full of fight. When I commented on this to Henry Wilson, now meteorically Chief of the Imperial General Staff, he replied in his extravagant way, "He's all right for this job, but we must *drown* him as soon as it's over." L.G. seemed to thrive on difficulties and crises and his rebound was remarkable. Unhampered in his choice of method or instrument by fetish or old school tie of friendship or tradition, he took every hurdle in his stride regardless of style. He had a natural flair for strategy which would have been useful to the General Staff, and had they followed his advice the war would have ended sooner. But the General Staff mistrusted him and even Henry Wilson, now sitting in the War Office, followed the Robertson tradition.

Looking back I am not at all sure that the astute Welshman did not select me for this job knowing that with a pain in my leg, and coming straight from the centre of anxiety, I would boil over and cut through diplomacy rather than not get the trooping programme fulfilled. Certainly if necessary I would have played the idiot boy and committed a political *bêtise*, but so wholeheartedly was the American nation now in the war that I believe they would have tarred and feathered the President himself if they had thought that delay in

America was jeopardizing the safety of the boys "over there."

Sir Guy Granet, a member of the Army Council and Food Controller, Sir Graeme Thompson, the Controller of Shipping and Railways, and Major-General Hutchison in charge of Movements at the War Office, were sent out on the same ship.

Sir Guy Granet was to see that the supply of food from America to Europe should be consistent with the requirements not only of the civil population, but also of the fresh troops from America it was proposed to transport to France. Sir Graeme Thompson was given powers to control all shipping under the Allied flag wherever situated at the moment, and organize the dispatch of food, munitions, and most important of all, men, to France. He was much assisted in his task by the American authorities, who with a thoroughness and sang-froid impossible in any other nation, appropriated all neutral shipping lying in their harbours at the time. Major General Hutchison was to assist the American Staff to organize the lines of communication from the camps to the sea bases and expedite the smooth working of the flow of man-power to France.

Lastly, I myself was to supply the persuasive power to get the President to scrap all preconceived notions of the American Expeditionary Force of 1919 and concentrate on saving the Allies in June or July 1918. I made a flying visit to Versailles to get the last appreciation from the Supreme War Council and interviewed Foch, who decided as Generalissimo of the Forces to send a personal letter to President Wilson, in which he stated that unless President Wilson sent 200,000 bayonets a month, apart from services of the rear to France during the next three

months, he must lose the war. This letter was actually sent.

I took only two officers to America with me, Walter Wilson, a "rugger" international, a fine soldier with a brain, as G.S.O. 1, and "Kit" Cator of the Scots Guards as aide-de-camp. Walter Wilson was given certain statistics by the War Office showing the gravity of the crisis in terms of man-power, reserves and losses of men from the last German offensives. So serious was this summary that Wilson was ordered to commit the figures to memory and destroy the memorandum. We sailed by the greyhound *Mauretania*, a dowdy empty transport with all her beautiful fittings covered over or removed and her hull camouflaged in futurist designs.

On arrival in New York we saw no troops embarking, but the quays were littered with thousands of cases all alike. "High explosive shell I expect," said Walter. Out of curiosity I sent him to investigate. "Sanitary paper for a million men for one year," he reported, "and *in rolls*." Small packets had long replaced rolls in our Army as the latter were cumbersome and the men threw them away. This was Pershing's Services of the Rear preparing for the Great Campaign.

We found a house, complete with servants, in Rhode Island Avenue, Washington, and shared it with Sir Guy Granet. Most of his business, however, was in New York, and he was seldom with us.

As on my previous visit I found the President courteous and genial, but even more Olympian and unapproachable on the subject of the war. No doubt the Messiah Complex was now germinating in his brain. He had, however, to receive the Prime Minister's message, but asked me to communicate all details to Colonel House or Mr. Newton

Baker, preferring, as he said, to get all information through his staff. His classic notes with their perfectly balanced phrasing took some time to mature and left little room in his one-track mind for other matter and sometimes House would say, "The President has a note coming, we must wait until he has got it out of his system."

What struck me at once was that America from the President down was only just beginning to realize the war and that we were going to have a hard struggle to win it. Though the German offensive and alarming Press reports had begun to stir things up there was still the "business as usual" atmosphere and people seemed to have the idea that they were in for a nice long war regardless of the fact that Europe had been fighting for nearly four years and the end, if only from exhaustion, must be nearly in sight.

Mr. Secretary Baker, however, had returned enlightened from a visit to France, and backed by a very efficient Chief of the General Staff, General Peyton C. March, was preparing to give new impetus to the Colossus.

It was interesting to visit the War Department and see what progress had been made during the year. The artillery situation was far from satisfactory. We had in the British 18-pounder field-gun firing shrapnel the best man-stopping weapon of the war, annihilating to a visible target in close formation. Its rate of fire was three to five rounds a minute. On the other hand the French 75 mm. was a light gun with a very rapid rate of fire which searched out any given area with high explosive. The American gun was to be a hybrid of the two. When finally completed, although it combined rapidity and hard hitting, the carriage could not stand the strain of recoil and had to be scrapped. This wasted a great deal of time. Although

there was a small output of "English model" 75 mm. field-guns, the French types upon which the Administration ultimately fell back were still in the experimental stage, and no output was expected until about November 1918 (when the war was over). These were the 75 mm. field-guns and the 155 and 240 mm. howitzers, in which the manufacture of the recuperators represented the chief difficulty. By June 1918, the manufacture of ammunition had been entirely suspended owing to a series of accidents, disappointments and failures. Some of these were incidental to production, but many no doubt were due to sabotage.

However, in spite of the inroads of the German offensive of March 1918, and the Italian disaster, the British and French were still in a position to gun adequately thirty American divisions though scarcely on the extravagant scale the United States Administration had laid down.

Aeroplane manufacture was also disappointing. Though the much advertised Liberty engine, again embodying features of British, French and Italian engines, gave fair results, it generally had to be taken down and reassembled at Bristol. At the end of the war we had one squadron of D.H.9a fitted with it. No war-planes had as yet been made in America and the Curtis bi-planes in use for training were regarded as death-traps and the casualties on the flying-fields were alarming.

On the other hand, considering six months had been lost waiting for the preparations of cantonments, the manpower situation and the preliminary training of troops were satisfactory. The discipline of the troops (of the camp and march order) was excellent. The new officers, mostly picked college undergraduates, trained in an

intensive course at camps of instruction, like Plattsburg and Fort Meyer, were well reported on, and there was no doubt as to the general enthusiasm. The physique of the Army was splendid and its health up to the time of the influenza epidemic nearly perfect. Training carried out by large British and French Missions was as may be imagined, somewhat unequal in quality.

I had found on my return to the United States that our stocks had depreciated. Statements derogatory to the British were to be found in the Press which gave the idea that the French were bearing the whole burden of the war while the British looked on. French propagandists, headed by Tardieu, now French High Commissioner, who had been withdrawn from the trenches after Verdun and sent to America to educate public opinion, were active, and our side of the question appeared to have gone by default. The recent defeat of the 5th Army, the removal of Gough and the appointment of Foch as Generalissimo were good ammunition, though the fact that the French had been playing a waiting game and on the defensive ever since Pétain succeeded Nivelle after the unsuccessful attacks of April 1917 seemed to have escaped notice. I was sorry for Gough who was badly treated. With fourteen divisions against forty-two, he was vastly outnumbered, and from all accounts, he handled his army well and his troops fought a valiant rear-guard action. The God of Battles, tired no doubt of our inaction, turned on a two-days' fog, which greatly aided the Germans. Rumour had been busy with Gough's name and had he been superseded earlier in the war, it would not have caused great surprise. Many of us considered Gough a born cavalry leader and a great little fighter, but no Army Commander.

With his fine flair for propaganda, Lord Northcliffe, who had performed invaluable service for us in America as head of a Mission, cabled home in September 1917: "We have no British Military Representative who has seen anything of the war—American soldiers in France write only about the French Army. Nothing is heard of our fleet—if it were not for certain leaders the French would get everything. Newspapers give the impression that the war is being fought by France and Canada. At a popular theatre here one of the scenes depicted nightly is of Canadian troops returning from the battlefield to their meals which are being cooked for them by British soldiers. We have far to go before we have placed ourselves on an equality with the French here. There is no propaganda against the French. The Irish and German propaganda is to the effect that we are getting all the money and doing little of the work."

In order to force us to send every available man to France and to get the American Administration to bring pressure to bear on Lloyd George to subscribe to the theory that it was only there that the war could be won, the French had persistently plied the American Government and the Press with stories that we had not combed out our stay-at-homes or, as the French called them *embusqués*, with sufficient severity. In fact not without some reason the French called our first published list of the recipients of the O.B.E. the *Ordre Britannique Embusqué*. They even pointed the finger of scorn at the large number of able-bodied officers and men employed in our various Missions in the United States. Perhaps the War Office thought of this when they picked my staff, for we were three jolly cripples. Wilson had been badly wounded twice, in the stomach and the head, and had to wear

black glasses, and poor "Kit" Cator shot through the lung, was a good imitation of a corpse. Both came to the ship from hospital, whilst I myself went about intermittently on crutches and could wear five wound stripes.

Our British communiqués were in some measure responsible for this state of affairs. With our far-flung Empire it was necessary to favour the exploits of the overseas forces. It was argued that the British public at home were fully aware what sacrifices their troops were making, as they had visible signs every day, but that the overseas dominions had no such advantages and must be given full recognition in the *communiqués* to keep them in the picture. The result was that the uninitiated in America, assisted by subtle propaganda, believed that the Dominion Forces were pushed into all the most dangerous attacks and that the British rank and file were not pulling their weight. No one would have been more angry than the Overseas contingents themselves if this point of view had ever been suggested to them for the records and the appalling casualty lists of the Highland, County and Cockney regiments of the British Forces in France needed no embellishment. They were the backbone of the Army. In attack or defence their spirit never faltered, and they stand for all those qualities which the symbol of the "Unknown Warrior" is designed to portray.

Unfortunately, Colonel Repington, the Military Correspondent of *The Times*, who had a big following, chose this opportunity for a violent attack on the Government and bluntly accused them of keeping men at home who should be in France. Colonel Repington's writings received far more publicity in America than they should have done, and assisted to lower our prestige.

All these factors had to be combated if I was to get a

fair hearing for the British point of view in the war. It seemed a paltry waste of time to have to counter the propaganda of our allies but it had to be done. We were also hampered by the British custom of refusing to publish strength and casualty figures, and I had to get a special dispensation for this from the War Office. Our procedure was to gather important newspaper men together at a luncheon or dinner and give them a *résumé* of the position and invite discussion. When they heard that we had had a million casualties in the past sixteen months, i.e., since America entered the war, their usual exclamation was, "Why the hell didn't you say so before?" Many questions were cleared up and I made some good friends. The revulsion of feeling was immediate, and the results of these conferences most gratifying. As on my previous visit I found the gentlemen of the Press helpful and even considerate. You could lay the cards on the table and say that this and this should not get into the newspapers as it might do harm, and you could be sure they would keep silence on the matter. I believe these few conferences were of great assistance also in combating insidious German and Irish propaganda at that time rife.

Touched by the spirit of prophecy I told them in New York that American bayonets were now the decisive factor of the war and could win or lose it for us in 1918. If this had been whispered in my ear by an archangel my own reaction would have been, "Oh, yeah!" So often had one been disappointed.

I visited several of the Divisional camps but as my principal task was to ensure a big flow of troops to Europe in May, June and July, I spent most of my time between Washington and New York, where I haunted the docks. Rooms were kept for me in the Plaza Hotel, and I shall

always remember the superb outlook. In the morning, a forest of strange golden buildings emerged from a rosy mist, like a vision of some city of Atlantis, while at night cubes and cones and pinnacles of light pierced the sky and mingled with the stars. If asked where I would like to live I would say, Captain's quarters in a flotilla-leader at sea, or top floor of the Plaza Hotel, New York. It was a grilling summer rivalling Cawnpore, and on Sunday one was glad to get down to the sea at Southampton and bathe.

With characteristic thoroughness the Americans had blown up whole blocks of buildings to let the railways bring the troops straight up to the ships at Hoboken, and it was a cheering sight to see the men trooping up the sides of the big liners and packing in like old hands, although some of them could not have had more than two months' service. But France was a finishing school where graduation was rapid. We had at that time some 200,000 Americans brigaded with us, who thanks to their keenness had made astonishing progress in the art of war.

The Americans had more luxurious ideas of troopship accommodation than ourselves, indeed some of their ships only carried half the numbers we would have allotted to them. Nor would they at first use ships with a less speed than $11\frac{1}{2}$ knots whereas our minimum was a knot or two less. However, a satisfactory compromise was reached on these matters, everyone realizing by now that a great effort had to be made and any justifiable risks taken. We put, I fear, more men into some ships than the ships would justly hold, but the weather was benignly calm, and thanks to the now efficient convoy system there were very few successful submarine attacks. The trooping for the three months totalled over a million men. As Lloyd George had asked for 100,000 men a month and Wilson

had promised 120,000; to have sent over 300,000 a month shows the spirit in which all hands tackled the job, when it became really known that the position across the pond was serious.

The news of the arrival of this million of reinforcements on the battlefield must have come as a staggering shock to the German Oberheeresleitung, which had put every obstacle in their way on both sides of the Atlantic, as well as in the middle. "The Great American Army, where is it? It cannot fly, it cannot swim, it cannot therefore help the Allies!" These words of the German War Minister to the Reichstag remained to be eaten. By October 1918 there were two million American troops in France and the honours for their safe conduct must go to the British Navy and the convoy system.

New York was, of course, alive with spy scares and sabotage stories. Von Rintelen with his little devices for destroying ships at sea had fortunately been caught, but there were others at large. Typical of the times was it that two of my staff were accused of divulging the date of sailing of a troopship, afterwards torpedoed, to two ladies of the town with whom they had been dining. Needless to say this was a malicious invention.

I was asked to participate in numerous conferences in Washington and New York, notably on questions of the New Poland with the ever charming and temperamental Paderewski, to whom more than any other individual Poland owes her independent existence. From the outbreak of war his home near Lucerne had been a centre for Polish irreconcilables, and in America he created a branch of the Polish Committee. Dmowski, the head of the movement in Paris, uncompromising in his demands for Poland and strongly anti-Jewish, made little headway.

But Paderewski was supple, a good diplomat and a fine speaker in French or English. By his popularity and his many contacts he won early recognition for Poland and through Colonel House got Poland's independence included in Wilson's Fourteen Points at the end of 1917 and acknowledged as a war aim by the Big Three in Paris the following June. He endeavoured to organize a Polish Army from the three million Poles in America through their *sokols* (gymnastic clubs), but when the United States entered the war these became subject to the Draft Law. However, a Polish Legion was formed and placed unreservedly under Paderewski and his committee, trained at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Canada, and shipped to France.

My admiration for this great-hearted patriot grew with time and we have since been firm friends. His whole life has reflected his devotion to his country. Like many musicians, Paderewski is a fine card-player and loves a game of bridge. After getting up from the table the only winner one night at our house in London, as I put him into a car he pressed his winnings, some £14, into my hands. "Give it," he said, "to your poor disabled soldiers." When his secretary heard the story he said with resignation, "He does that all the time. We are starving." As Saint-Saens once said of him: "*C'est un génie qui joue aussi du piano.*"

Professor Mazaryk was also in Washington at this time enjoying unlimited prestige after the dangers, labours and fantastic journeys of his odyssey in the cause of Czechoslovakia. This country, too, was also to be assured of her place in the sun, though Mazaryk was always haunted by the idea that Austria might still contrive a separate peace guaranteeing her territorial independence, such as had been proposed by Prince Sixte of Bourbon. If Czechoslovakia was the child of Propaganda, her father was

certainly Mazaryk. He had raised revolt in Prague in 1914 and from that time had become the Prophet of the Czechoslovaks. He left Prague in December 1917 to return only as President of the new State after the war. He had led the Czechoslovak Legions, composed of prisoners and deserters from the Austrian Army in Siberia and by his efforts supplied them with funds. He, like Benes, his contemporary and successor, worked in and out of season for the cause and his efforts were crowned with striking success. Nowhere did he meet with receptions such as in America but then Chicago is only second to Prague as a Czech city. President Wilson, to whom he was a kindred soul, espoused his cause from the first. Nor was Mazaryk empty-handed, he had something to bargain with, an army corps of 50,000 veterans on their way from Russia to the Western Front. Also his defence of Jews against persecution under the Hapsburgs' rule had given him strong support in the Press of Great Britain and America and some financial backing.

The British Government were at this time seized with the desirability of intervention in Siberia to suppress the Bolsheviks and recreate an Eastern Front. The War Office directed me to urge the matter on the Secretary for War. We held several meetings at Washington on the subject, the general opinion being that no military intervention was likely to be efficacious with a force of less than 300,000 men. This view was held by Mazaryk, who knew the conditions in Siberia from experience, nor was he at all in favour of warlike operations against the Bolsheviks. The Japanese on the other hand were said to be feeling bellicose and ready and willing to collaborate and were the only people with 300,000 men to spare. Making a speech at the Military Attaché's monthly dinner

in Washington, their representative said, "We are a fighting race. We want to fight, we don't care who we fight, but we must fight!" *In vino veritas*, perhaps. The President himself eventually torpedoed this plan, and one can hardly blame him. Detachments of United States troops were, however, sent to North Russia and to Vladivostock to show the flag.

My relations with Lord Reading were excellent and he was *au mieux* with the President. Powerful as he was in discussion across the table, especially in matters of figures, I was disappointed in his public speeches which did not always seem to grip the audience. With his dominant mastery of financial matters as witnessed by more than one good deal he achieved, I cannot think he could have advised the settlement of the American Debt question on terms that appeared unnecessarily disadvantageous to us.

A view commonly held by fair-minded Americans was this: as the United States had taken no steps to prepare for the war until she actually came in, and as for another year she was unable to take active part in hostilities, during which time the Allies had held the fort and suffered over two million casualties, it was scarcely fair to ask payment for munitions and other supplies sent over during that period. The profits of neutrality too had been great, for in war there is no time to bargain. Thus for example a 9·2 shell made in England cost us £5, while the price for the same article from the United States was £17 10s.

On the other hand, I believe Lord Reading allowed the British Government to harbour the delusion that Woodrow Wilson when he came to Europe would have America behind him and the Tired Titans at the Peace Conference were only too glad to clutch at such a simple way out of their difficulties. I had advised the Chief of

the Imperial General Staff in the opposite sense. Having had experience of the President's limited horizon I doubted whether he would be able to sink his domestic politics for the benefit of his ideology. When I heard the President was coming to Paris in 1918 I felt genuinely sorry for him, as he was no debater and the rarefied atmosphere of the White House was poor preparation for a battle of wits with two such uncompromising and crafty fighters as Lloyd George and Clemenceau. He lost a great part of his value when he left his pedestal and stepped down into the arena. He roused the hostility of his political opponents by taking with him to Europe only a negligible representation of the Republican Party, and when he returned to America to be re-elected on the cry, "Vote for the Democratic Party and the League of Nations," he drove the first nail into the coffin of the League, and incidentally into his own.

I returned to England with the Readings in the *Mauretania*, leaving Walter Wilson in New York in the important position of British Provost-Marshal. With a Greek profile and all the boys away, life was difficult for him, but I understand he carried out his duties admirably and bore in mind the opening phrase of the Foreign Office instructions issued to us on leaving London: "You will re-establish intimate relations with the Americans."

Lord Reading asked me to accompany him again to Washington on his second visit, but I felt that I was not sufficiently *persona grata* with the President or the Secretary for War to be of much use. Moreover, having now regained my health, I still had hopes of commanding an Army Corps in France and of being in at the death.

On my return I was questioned by the War Cabinet and my report was characterized as gloomy. The men

certainly had come over, but the situation in war material was not satisfactory. That the United States would be unable to produce a great number of 'planes by the spring of 1919 was particularly disappointing to the Prime Minister, who had the vision to anticipate a great air offensive. The American Press had certainly done its best by announcing that thousands of American 'planes with American pilots were already in France, when as a matter of fact there were none, and such machines as eventually came from America were reproductions of European models, such as the D.H.4 with Liberty engines. This, however, was outside my province.

A summons also arrived for me to report to the King at Windsor, and I had a simple war lunch alone with the King and Queen and Princess Mary, and told them all the Washington news. The King had been to France and gave a graphic account of the suffering and losses of the troops in the "Back to the Wall" battle. Too graphic, indeed, for the kind heart of Princess Mary, who wept and left the room.

I was now dispatched to France to see General Pershing and discuss certain training questions with him and to make contact with some of the American Divisions to find out if I could be of any use to them. The General was living in the *Rue de Varennes*, in the beautiful house of Mr. Ogden Mills, which had been placed at his disposal, and my old friend Quekmeyer was now his aide and put me wise as to the general situation. In spite of the interference with his trooping programme General Pershing was now satisfied with the way things were going. He had a good grasp of the problem, though his solution of it was coloured by his avowed intention to have the whole American Army in line under his command rather than by the desire to finish off the war as speedily as possible.

Unaffected by the war weariness of the Allies he was looking forward with zest to the campaign of 1919. He was no longer prepared to discuss the question of training American troops with the British and gave one the impression that he was tired of being approached on the subject.

All the same the short cut to victory would have been to keep the American troops brigaded with the Allies in small or large units and to have made use of all the staff machinery already existing. They could then have gone straight into the fray instead of waiting for months until American staffs had gained the necessary experience to mount a battle and would have been available as seasoned troops for the American Army when wanted. But any plans of this kind were wrecked by Pershing's obstinate military patriotism. We had actually trained ten divisions with the British, but they were generally taken away as soon as they became useful. However, we were only too thankful to have got American infantry over in sufficient numbers to stop the gaps, for it spelt the difference between victory and defeat, and we could wisely allow them to call the tune. Had we known it, the Germans were now weakening and the end of the war was near.

My old Butterfly Division had been kind enough to send me Sergeant Martin and the Rolls, and I was able to see four or five American Divisions in the line, and found them taking kindly to the war. The men were splendid, they had excellent discipline of the march and camp order and enough enthusiasm to carry them through most things. Battle discipline and organization, however, are not lightly acquired as Pershing was later to find to his cost. While his seasoned divisions in their first independent operation scored an exhilarating success in cutting off the St. Mihiel Salient, his main attack in the Argonne

by less experienced troops, though outnumbering the Germans by the unusual odds of about ten to one, and supported by 2,700 guns, was held up after the first day and failed, despite strenuous endeavour to reach half-way to its objective. Pershing continued to press doggedly, but after many days of desultory fighting had to confess stalemate and break off the battle to disentangle and reorganize his troops. The Americans had lost 100,000 men, and were said to have 100,000 stragglers which in the circumstances was not surprising.

On this trip I had for once the experience of attending a battle in the Grand Manner. Staying at the Ritz Hotel in Paris, I drove after breakfast in the Rolls to Soissons, and partook in a really heavy day's fighting, attack and counter-attack, in which the Americans of all ranks acquitted themselves like veterans. I got back to Paris in time for a bath before dinner. Martin thoroughly enjoyed himself and said it was like being at General Headquarters again. The desultory shelling of Paris by a new long-range gun added zest to our outing.

After this I visited Haig in the train, which now served him as advanced General Headquarters. He was in great good spirits at the splendid successes of his Army, confident and proud of his men. I gave him some account of the Americans and he then asked me what I wished to do next. I said I wanted to get back to the fighting line and having had a Division for nearly two years thought he might find me a Corps. He demurred as to my physical fitness, but said he would think it over. However, after reporting to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff in London, I was told to stand by to go on a special mission to the Balkans. I seemed by now to have become a kind of qualified missionary.

CHAPTER XI

AT SALONICA

"Come over into Macedonia and help us."—Acts xvi, 9.

CHAPTER XI

THE situation in the Near East had long been unfavourable to us. Astute German diplomacy and our own ineptitude combined with our appropriation of two battleships building on the Clyde for Turkey, and the failure to prevent the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* reaching Constantinople, had encouraged the Turks to come into the war against us. The Dardanelles campaign, however great its conception, had failed in execution and the only classic part of the operations from a military standpoint had been the withdrawal. Here too the issue had been compromised by the tardy disclosure of a secret pact with Russia promising her the disposal of Constantinople. This meant that the Turks would fight to the last man in defence of their capital and that the Greek troops promised for the operation would not be forthcoming.

Early in 1915 I had written to the Prime Minister the views of King Albert who knew intimately the mind of his kinsman, the Tsar Ferdinand of Bulgaria, although there was no love lost between them. He was of opinion that if properly handled Bulgaria could be induced to come in on our side. "They will do what their Tsar orders," he said. This was borne out by my later experiences on the spot. Public opinion was almost non-existent and I have met Bulgarians who said that even when mobilized they thought they were coming in with the Allies. King Albert advocated sending a good statesman and a good general to Sofia with the Garter for Ferdinand and a definite promise of territorial compensation

accompanied by some kind of guarantee. This certainly opened a delicate question, for at whose expense was Bulgaria to be bribed? Nothing, however, was done, and the Bulgarians, quiescent as long as the Russians were in the Carpathians and the situation in the Dardanelles uncertain, after the Battle of Suvla Bay joined our enemies. Then followed the Allied occupation of Salonica and somewhat abortive operations therefrom. It had become increasingly difficult to sustain this Macedonian force owing to sickness, lack of drafts and material and the growing menace of submarines in the Mediterranean.

Roumania bouyed up by false hopes and an unjustified pride in her own achievements, having in the last Balkan War come in at the eleventh hour and snatched rich booty with no sacrifice, decided in 1917 to enter into the war at an ill-chosen moment and with a faulty plan of campaign. The Roumanian Army was set upon by Germans, Austrians and Bulgars and in three months utterly routed, chased out of its own country and forced to sign a cruel peace. The enemy occupied Roumania and had access to her rich granary and oilfields. For lack of timely Allied help the Serbs also had been defeated and driven out of their country and the Greeks, though divided by political dissension, were possible enemies.

All this induced a gloomy outlook in London, and it is only natural that there were continual movements towards cutting our losses and evacuating Macedonia as we had the Gallipoli Peninsula. Sir W. Robertson, indeed, then Chief of the Imperial General Staff, repeatedly insisted on the unsoundness of the operation and asked for the recall of the expedition. But the project had been the pet child of Briand and Lloyd George, and the latter, who by 1917 was confirmed in his views against the war of

attrition in the West, declared that the Salonica troops might be moved to Egypt, but he would never agree to their going to France. So there they stayed and thanks to General Milne and excellent officers under him, the little British force was kept in good heart and efficiency though never up to establishment.

Neither were the French idle. They had sent out enough troops to give themselves a preponderance and to assume the commanding rôle. In addition to the reorganization and re-equipment of the Serbian Army the French also undertook that of the Greeks and Roumanians, difficult tasks for which they had a special aptitude and which they carried out with commendable efficiency. The British provided a great deal of the clothing and were responsible for supplies and shipping for which they got small credit.

General Sarrail, whose appointment was due to French politics, did not stay long, but did indeed succeed in forcing the abdication of King Constantine and the adhesion of the Greeks under Venezelos to the Allied cause. Greece was now in the unique position of being guaranteed by both sides. Germany would restore King Tino to the throne and preserve his kingdom intact, while the Allies having forced Greece to put an army in the field to join them could scarcely deprive her of territory later. Venezelos now ruled Greece with an iron hand and proved a loyal and efficient ally. He was highly suspicious of any Entente overtures to Bulgaria to detach her from the Central Powers as this could only be done by bribing her at the expense of Greece. The fact that America had not declared war on Bulgaria and so left the door open to negotiation was a source of anxiety to him.

After Sarrail came Guillaumat, a much more sympa-

thetic personality, who brought the Allies together and evolved a team spirit without which there would have been little hope of successful operations. But Guillaumat was recalled to Paris to act as an understudy to Foch and Pétain, both for the moment shaky in the saddle. This would have been a fitting time for General Milne, who had proved his worth, to have been given supreme command, but post haste from France came another big noise in Franchet d'Esperey, relieved from his command of the group of armies in the north.

Up to this time our military efforts at Salonica had been futile and exhausting, but with the Germans weakening and the Bulgars disheartened, both General Guillaumat and General Milne were now alive to the chances of a successful drive or even a break through. To this end Guillaumat put the case in Paris and urged it on the Supreme War Council whilst on his part General Milne clamoured incessantly for the drafts required to bring his battalions up to establishment and the ammunition and material necessary for an advance. He had eventually to operate without them, his reinforcements arriving, as was not unusual in our Army, long after the event.

The Supreme War Council though up to the last moment preparing to remove troops from Salonica, finally gave in. At the time I gathered that they thought the offensive could do no harm and would keep the mercurial Greeks amused and prevent them drifting over to the enemy. It was agreed that preparations should be made for an offensive movement to be ready by the 1st October, 1918. They had reckoned without Franchet d'Esperey, and it may here be recorded that this dynamic personage had completed his campaign by that date and forced the Bulgarians to sign an Armistice on 30th September. The

little coloured flags on Henry Wilson's map at the War Office advanced at such a pace that it was suddenly realized that the much-abused side-show at Salonica was going to justify itself after all.

My mission to Salonica concentrated in Paris. I was amused to see one of the officers who had never been to Paris though he had fought in France for three years being closely questioned by a sergent de ville for photographing the Ritz Hotel where we had spent the night. We trundled down by train to the heel of Italy, having thrills at Turin which was decorated with red flags. Miraculously two Fiat cars ordered, were hooked on to our train there for the Quartermaster General would not let a good Rolls-Royce leave France. Waiting a day at Taranto I called on the Italian Admiral, Acton, a relation of Lord Acton. He was a charming man and proud of his fleet, and his ships certainly looked in good order, well painted and polished and all snug and intact behind the boom where they spent most of the war. We took a degradingly dirty vessel called the *Timagd*, full of French soldiery to Itea, consulted the oracle at Delphi, thence by a good British-made road to join the railway, and so to Salonica, where I made my bow to the Generals of the Allied Forces, who had their dwellings under the eyes of the Gods on Mount Olympus.

The grandiose title of our party was the "Mission Militaire Britannique près le Général Commandant-en-Chef les Armées Alliées d'Orient," and its task was to smooth out any difficulties that might occur between our Allies and ourselves and to keep the War Office informed of the progress of operations and of the general conditions in the Balkans. Neither French nor British commanders were pleased to see us, but when they realized that we

had come not as spies but to make ourselves useful, we got on well.

Franchet d'Esperey, the Commander-in-Chief, with whom I was to be in close contact for many months, was a remarkable man. He was one of those short thick Frenchmen with good teeth and digestion and was extremely intelligent, well-read and a master of the art of war. He was above all *guerrier*, a fighting man. Born in Algeria and joining the *Tirailleurs* at a tender age, he had seen much service, and had campaigned in Tunisia, Tonkin, China and Morocco. At the outbreak of the Great War he commanded the 1st Corps at Lille and was responsible for the victory at Guise for which he was promoted to lead the 5th Army on the Marne, where he played an important part. He had since then commanded two different Army Groups. He was now sixty-two but very energetic and no day seemed too long for him. I have travelled weary journeys with him and can testify that he slept with equal energy and would awake all standing on the *qui vive*, to look from the railway carriage window in his queer striped French drawers tied with bows round the ankle, exclaiming, "Sapristi!" at something which excited his interest. Though in common with most Frenchmen he would never credit the British with straightforward or disinterested motives, one could not help liking him. In the field he was explosive and Napoleonic. "*Ils ne passeront pas*" meant nothing to him. "*On les aura!*" was his motto. A great general even, I fancy, to history.

The rupture of the Bulgar front had already been effected by the time we arrived at Salonica and I heard a good deal of it from the French General's lips. This is no war history, but the operation was dramatic enough to interest anyone.

The Allied Armies disposed of twenty-eight Divisions, eight French, six Serbian, four British, one Italian and nine Greek, or a force of about 180,000 men and 1,500 guns, which faced about an equal number of Bulgars and Germans on a front of 140 miles. Never were two armies so equally matched. If the Bulgars were disillusioned, the Allies were weakened by malaria. If the Germans were war-weary, the Allies on the other hand had to deal with troops of five nationalities, of which the Greeks were considered for political reasons to be of problematical value. Both sides were well commanded. Only in aircraft had the Allies a very distinct superiority.

West of the Vardar River which cut the position in half is a steep and massive mountain range averaging some 4,500 feet, and in front of this forbidding obstacle the most difficult and therefore the least likely point of attack, Franchet d'Esperey stealthily massed his hardy Serbians under Prince Regent Alexander¹ and their Chief of the Staff, the veteran Voivode Michitch, who was partly responsible for the plan. By reinforcing the Serbs with two good French divisions, which it was expressly stipulated were to be used for the rupture of the front line, a local superiority of three to one was attained. Meanwhile the attention of the unsuspecting Bulgars was diverted by feints and demonstrations on other parts of the front.

When the attack was loosed after a one-day bombardment, the French captured the front line, and the Serbs, fighting to get back their homes, stormed the crests with irresistible ardour and broke through the whole strong defensive system of the surprised Bulgarians. Over the frontier they streamed on to Serbian soil, embracing their

¹ Assassinated at Marseilles in 1935.

French comrades, cheering and singing the Marseillaise. The Bulgars, who were also tough fighters, counter-attacked boldly and for hours the battle fluctuated, but nothing could stop the Serbs, and throughout the day and night they pressed on, "*l'épée dans les reins de l'ennemi*." A three-day battle gave the Allies important gains that were to force retreat on the enemy.

The British then came into the picture and General Milne attacked the strong positions on either side of Lake Doiran, which his troops already knew only too well. Though the infantry partially penetrated into the Bulgar lines they could not stay there, and the attacks were unsuccessful, except in so far as they pinned the enemy to his trenches and so prepared the way for his *débâcle*. The Greek divisions with the British (the Seres and Cretan) being fresh attacked with great vigour, but our own troops, fever-ridden and under strength were unable in most cases to reach their objectives. In spite of heavy losses General Milne loyally renewed his attack to the west of the lake on the next day, but after varying fortunes it failed all along the line. The seriousness of these efforts, however, prevented the enemy moving his reserves, and helped the general plan of battle.

The left now became the marching wing of the Army and from 18th September on began the enlargement of the breach and the exploitation of success until the enemy's communications became seriously endangered. The official historian gives us a vignette of Prince Boris, the Commander-in-Chief, on the one side gallantly endeavouring to stem the tide, dashing from one threatened point to another in a light lorry driven by himself. On the other hand we have a picture of "Desperate Frankie" (as he was inevitably nicknamed by the British) catching

up the French cavalry in his car and personally ordering General Jouinot-Gambetta to march direct on Skoplje with his three regiments of Spahis and Moroccans. They were able to reach this important junction by a forced night march over mountain tracks and snatch it from the garrison by a surprise attack in the morning mist twenty miles ahead of the French infantry and in face of very superior forces.

The Bulgars and Germans, some manœuvring for position, and some already in retreat, were heavily bombed by our aircraft without opposition, the German airmen having apparently packed up and gone. The narrow pass of Kosturino became a shambles of men, animals and vehicles, and this contributed, no doubt, to the fact that on the 22nd Franchet d'Esprey was able to signal to his Commanders that the whole enemy army was in retreat and that the retreat must be turned into a rout.

On the 26th a Bulgarian parlementaire was already suing for peace, and on the 30th the Commander-in-Chief, now in a position to announce to the delegates that Skoplje, the second town in Serbia was in his hands and the whole 11th Army Corps cut off, granted an armistice.

The delegates posed as anti-Ferdinand and friends of the Allies, but they were quickly disillusioned. "*Qu'est-ce qu'il dit, ce cochon là?*" demanded the General impatiently of the interpreter. The terms were short and salutary and included the immediate evacuation of Greek and Serbian territory, the ejection of the Germans and Austrians, disarmament and demobilization except for three divisions and two cavalry regiments required for police purposes. No Allied military occupation of Sofia except in case of need. Some 77,000 prisoners were taken and an army of a million men put out of business in

a fortnight's fighting in spite of the Supreme War Council and the British War Office which even during the operations was still debating the withdrawal of troops from General Milne.

No wonder Franchet d'Esperey, hot from the battle, was exultant, for although the Germans were falling back in France, and Allenby was hammering the Turks in the Holy Land (Damascus fell on 30th September), here was the first crack that finally broke up the hard egg of the Central Powers and it had a shattering effect on their *moral*.

The Bulgars showed their good sense in avoiding a revolution and although Tsar Ferdinand at whose dictates they had joined the Central Powers abdicated in response to public clamour, the Crown Prince Boris, who was deservedly popular with the Army and the people, now ascended the only throne to be left to the enemy powers. His position, defeated, alone and with revolution stalking through Europe, was not enviable, but he accepted it with courage and held it with fortitude and dignity.

Franchet d'Esperey now pushed on the Serbs, who alone of all his troops did not march on their bellies, to capture Nish: he had a grandiose plan of advance in three armies. With his right on the Black Sea, his left on the Adriatic, he would sweep through Europe. "Next stop Dresden," was now his watchword. A small Anglo-French force under a French General would march on Constantinople. General Milne, however, was of a different opinion. Realizing on the one hand the difficulty of the advance to the Danube owing to broken communications, lack of supplies, bad weather and exhausted troops¹ and on the other the importance of Constantinople

¹ In November 1918, 900 British died of sickness and exhaustion at Salonica.

as a British objective, he advocated an advance on that place by a purely British force in conjunction with the Fleet.

Though the British Government shared this view, Mr. Lloyd George was not able to force it on the French Government, and it was agreed that while a mixed Allied force under a British General should march on Constantinople, they should still be under the orders of General d'Esperey and that British troops should also share in the march north to liberate Serbia. General Berthelot, who had already once organized the defeated Roumanians, was to return to them and reconstitute an army of the Danube with the object of attacking Hungary. So General Milne and Admiral the Hon. Sir S. A. Gough-Calthorpe moved on Constantinople by land and sea and the Turks, resigning themselves to the inevitable, capitulated and signed an armistice with the Admiral after several days of haggling on 30th October. The fact that the French Admiral was not invited to share in these proceedings was taken somewhat amiss, but there was no doubt that having beaten the Turks we had every right to lay down the terms. Yet here began many months of jealousy and intrigue between the Allies, leading to serious weakness in their position for which the joint occupation of the Turkish capital and the neglect to nominate one supreme commander must be held chiefly responsible.

All would have been well had the British been in sole military control of the city, but the French, Italians and Americans, who had played no part in the defeat of the Turks, all had a finger in the pie, and only too often found occasion to undermine the authority or prestige of their allies by pandering to the Turk, who, born diplomat as he is, profited by the situation and played for time. Time!

The thoroughly beaten enemy was given two years to recuperate, whilst the Allies argued and bickered over the division of the spoil, and at the end of that period, having succeeded in dividing them and rearming himself with their aid, Mustapha Kemal threw down the gauntlet at the Gates of Istanbul.

Probably no army in the world could have rivalled the Serbs in their march on the Danube. Communications had been destroyed and the country more or less devastated. They were confronted by strong Austrian and German rear-guards who forced them to deploy frequently. They were far in advance of their supplies and wheeled vehicles, bootless, in rags and reduced in numbers by the prevailing influenza epidemic but marching and fighting continuously in the Napoleonic manner for nearly a month. In the words of the Commander of the Danube Divisions: "One day they eat, the next they tighten their belts." The Serbs, however, enjoyed peculiar compensating advantages. They were liberating their country, and the joyful villagers produced their hidden supplies. Recruits swarmed in, bandits from the hills, peasants with concealed arms or escaping prisoners. I saw one company that had swelled from eighty men to 350, and amongst them were many deserters from the Austrian ranks, still wearing the enemy uniform but distinguishable by a knot of the Serb tricolour worn in their caps. Sturdy Serbian women even followed the mule batteries over the mountains carrying ammunition for the guns.

The Germans and Austrians, though more numerous than the troops opposed to them, were in no condition to resist the onslaughts of these patriots, but did indeed contrive good rear-guard operations which eventually enabled them to cross the Danube by steamers and

bridges without a rout. This was probably also due to the fact that with the exception of a few mountain batteries, artillery had been quite unable to keep up with the rapid advance, whilst the crossing of the Austro-Germans was covered by the fire of the monitors and gunboats of the Danube Fleet. The thirteen squadrons of French and Serbian cavalry that reached the Danube in pursuit, did not draw forage for six weeks, which says much for the hardihood of the horses, most of which were barbs and Serbian ponies.

The Supreme War Council after much deliberation now produced a ponderous project to move against Bavaria between the Inn and the Danube, with thirty Italian Divisions in which operation Franchet d'Esperey's role would be to demonstrate and cover their concentration. But they reckoned without our little fire-eater, who now had the bit between his teeth. He was the Man of Destiny, "the little Corporal," and his soldiers "*mes enfants*." He would ignore their absurd plan, keep the enemy on the run and strike at Germany through Hungary.

It was this relentless attitude that brought Count Karoly post-haste to his railway carriage at Novisac accompanied by representatives of the Hungarian council of workmen and soldiers. The General refused to shake hands and sent his companions right about.

"Aha! *Monsieur le Ministre*," he said scornfully, "*vous y êtes déjà!*"

Although revolution was imminent behind him, Karoly made difficulties. But Franchet d'Esperey was not going to discuss terms but to dictate them, and he countered with the threat of an immediate advance on Budapest. The Napoleon touch—"les rois prosternés dans l'ombre avec terreur."

The Prince Regent of Serbia had a well-deserved reception, when he reached Belgrade from the Serbian headquarters a few days after the arrival of his Danube Division. It was impressive in its simplicity. The Prince was met by his senior officers and the foreign representatives at a point from which he could see his capital some three miles distant. The party then walked informally down the gently sloping road which was lined by troops and civilians, all cheering madly. The first stop was the cathedral where a stirring service took place and afterwards he was conducted to the Palace.

The British Government was represented by my G.S.O. 1, McConnel, who had reached the town a few days earlier by air. The prestige of the British was amazingly high in Belgrade. McConnel reported that, if he merely crossed the street from the Palace to a military office, he was surrounded by hundreds of civilians who kissed his hand or the hem of his greatcoat. At a celebration party, his throat parched with thirst after flying in an icy wind, McConnel felt very queer after two glasses of some drink which had been pressed upon him and asked what it was. The lady beside him replied, "Wine. We made it yesterday. You see, the Austrians stole all we had."

The kaleidoscopic military situation and the quick changes of front on the part of the Supreme War Council gave us plenty to do. My first visit was to Sofia to examine and report and to establish a working military mission there. I found Prince Boris a sympathetic and lonely figure. The product of Coburg and Bourbon with no Bulgarian blood, he had much charm of manner. He was greatly attached to his sister and anxious about the fate of his father. He owed his popularity to the fact that he,

like King Albert, had been with his troops throughout the war. He showed me an officer's greatcoat and a watch that he himself had captured in a raid on the British lines, and asked if I thought he should return them. As we had just taken 400 of his guns it hardly seemed necessary. I urged him above all to keep his people in hand and to observe a correct attitude to the Armistice terms. Any infringement of these or double-dealing would lead to immediate military occupation of the capital and no doubt less favourable terms of peace.

On a later visit in June 1919 I wrote to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff: "The King gains influence every day. He is deservedly popular. An attractive personality, cultivated and accomplished, a good sportsman and keen soldier, he has at the same time all the dignity of race that gives him a strong ascendancy over his entourage. He is entirely without his father's duplicity. He is an asset to the future peace of the Near East and to Monarchies in general. If he has to go we will have ourselves to thank for mismanaging the problem."

For political and humane reasons the Serbs had not been allowed to march through Bulgaria and this led to some delay in the advance as the French had now to come up on their right and the Serbs to side-step further to the west. This move was also necessitated by the problem of communications, the French being allotted the Bulgarian railways, whilst the Serbs had to do without, the line to Belgrade having been demolished.

The 11th November found me at Lom-Palanka on the Danube trying to locate enemy troops, now said to be withdrawing from Roumania, or as Alistair¹ put it "looking for a German Army commanded by a Scot" (Mackensen).

¹ The late Lord Alistair Leveson-Gower, my aide-de-camp.

We did actually identify them on the left bank of the river. The countryside was now swarming with released prisoners, Serbs, Italians and even Russians, making their way south in a deplorable condition. The Italians were particularly miserable and searching the country like locusts ravening for food. But they were not popular, less so as most of them had been taken at Caporetto without fighting and the Serbian frontier was shortly afterwards closed to them by the Voivode Michitch. We gave one or two bootless Serbians a lift to the nearest habitation.

Driving south in the darkness we were greeted with a fusillade of shots. "Mackensen!" cried Alistair. "Comitadjis!" said I. More shooting. Then the chauffeur hit the bullseye by saying, "I guess this 'ere war's over and that's the Fewdejoy." We spent Armistice night at Nish making merry on rough Serbian wine and swearing eternal brotherhood with our French and Serbian comrades. But there suddenly seemed to be a vacuum in one's existence. No more need to sleep with one eye open or one ear to the telephone. Ghosts sprang from the grave that night and marched past for hours before I slept and after too.

I felt no great satisfaction, for the war had gone on too long and there were times when we had so nearly lost it.

In 1918 the race between German hammer blows and American reinforcements had been as Wellington said of Waterloo, "a damned nice thing." It was likely too to prove a Cadmean victory where the victors would suffer as much as the vanquished. History would no doubt criticize us, wanting to know why the traditional amphibian did not make better use of the Blue Water. With a state of siege from the Alps to the Channel and the Germans in the stronger position, we committed ourselves to a series of frontal attacks with a rising blood count beginning at

Loos with 40,000 and mounting to 400,000 at Passchendaele. Why? Because we were tied to French strategy which was concerned with the liberation of France, and all the Great Generals being deployed between Paris and Berlin insisted that decisive battles must be fought there. The only way to win the war, they said, was to kill the Germans where they were thickest regardless of the fact that they killed more of us. Any deflection of troops to other theatres quite naturally met with opposition. During the early part of the war we could surely have made greater efforts to turn the enemy's flanks and gain touch with the Russians before they collapsed. The Dardanelles attack had been good strategy and success would have saved the Serbs and Roumanians and given us Bulgaria as an ally, but its execution was piecemeal and niggardly.

Though by August 1918 the main enemy had weakened, it was here in the Near East at Salonica, the point always advocated by Lloyd George and Briand, that the rout had begun with the crushing defeat of the Bulgar-German armies, followed quickly by the Turkish débâcle. Strange that it should be the politicians that had the Big Idea and not the soldiers or were the latter so mixed up in the fight that they could not see the wood for the trees? Perhaps Briand was right when he said that war was too serious a matter to be entrusted to soldiers. Two other things stood out in one's mind which had had a decisive effect on the war, the tanks on land and the convoy system at sea, and in each case one understood that it was civilian insistence which had led to their development. Had we had the iron General Staff of Germany we should certainly have lost the war. No one could imagine Bethmann-Hollweg pressing new weapons or tactics on Ludendorff or von Tirpitz.

The democracies had triumphed and in their resiliency lay their strength. Yet if the soldiers and sailors listened to the statesmen in war, the latter should take heed to the warnings and suggestions of the fighting services in time of peace and by due exercise of team spirit seek to maintain that sure defence which the country had a right to expect.

No doubt we would march into Germany and garrison all the big towns and I should at last have a chance of riding my white horse down the Sieges Allee.

CHAPTER XII

STILL AT SALONICA

Kings are like stars—they rise, they set, they have
The worship of the world, but no repose.

Hellas—Shelley.

А.П.О.

CHAPTER XII

THE King and Queen of Roumania were now to return to their Capital after their two years' exile at Jassy, where by some strategic blunder on the part of the Germans they had been allowed to keep the flag flying and retain the nucleus of an army. I was ordered to proceed from Salonica to Bucharest and welcome them in the name of the British Government. The simple way was to take sea to Constanza but the Admiral could not give me a destroyer. As far as the Rupel Bridge over the Struma River, the floods were out and the road awful, so we sent a car on by rail, meaning to join it by "drissine" (a motor-car driven on the rails). Through some traffic control error we were driven in the dark into the back of a train and the infernal machine was telescoped and caught fire. The unfortunate driver with whom I was sitting, died of his injuries. The others were thrown out and Martin put his shoulder out, Alistair and Moore (our flying officer) being unhurt. I broke my artificial leg and got water on both knees. Fortunately the accident happened within half a mile of Doiran and the only field hospital on the line. We had to return by train to Salonica next day and I telegraphed my congratulations and respects to the Roumanian sovereigns. But a destroyer was now put at my disposal and two of my staff just managed to get to Bucharest in time. The Army was represented at the delirious scene by General Gay, commanding the 26th Division allotted to the Army of the Danube, with one of his brigades. I had a nice letter from the Queen with

photographs of herself and family. One could not but have a great admiration for this remarkable woman who carried the weight of the whole country on her shoulders and who was its saviour as surely as Albert I was the saviour of Belgium, for her Hohenzollern husband had little say in the matter.

Roumania still had hard times to go through and the winter of 1918-19 in the pillaged country was an anxious one. An officer of my staff wrote from Bucharest in February 1919: "The Queen holds the country literally in her pretty fingers, and if anything went wrong with her there would be chaos indescribable. Everything is quiet on the surface but even a stranger can see the fire smouldering under the snow. No wood, no coal, no paraffin, the Danube frozen, only 180 railway engines working out of 1,200 (minimum required), misery and starvation increasing. Next to the Queen, Berthelot (the French General) is the most popular personage. (Franchet d'Esperey said it was because he was so fat.) But even he cannot influence the Paris authorities and the Queen has to go herself to Paris and London to use her own personality."

When I was in Bucharest later the Queen took me one morning round the Tzigane quarter outside the town. It was touching to see the way the people worshipped her. She was always followed by a crowd of children, some playing their baby violins: she wore the National costume and made a charming picture. Some Americans at that time had started an "*œuvre*" to give the Tziganes warm vests and stockings for the winter. But not a sign of a vest did we see except in the shop windows for even with snow on the ground no self-respecting Tzigane girl would wear more than one garment. Except her own Government, the Queen had everyone under her spell, not

excluding our own representatives, and she turned their sympathy to practical use. A typical instance of this was the American Red Cross Commissioner for South-east Europe. Like an adoring retriever, he laid everything he could collect at her feet, even Red Cross stores and a hospital train destined for Denekin. His excuse for the latter was that the Roumanians had told him that Denekin would soon be wiped off the map!

Fortunately for Roumania, now on the verge of the pit of Bolshevism, Hungary cracked first and the Roumanians were called in April to restore order in that country and were able to get their own back, and most thoroughly they did it. Everything they wanted from Transylvania down to a pair of boots they took and, though they left behind a new crop of hatreds and irredenta, they were able to set their own house in order.

Considering the negligible and almost negative value of their military efforts the Roumanians did well out of the war. To have regained Transylvania (after 1,000 years of separation) was indeed a *tour de force*. In Western Europe such a separation would have been long buried and forgotten, but in the Balkans there is a technique of nursing grievances by song and story unrivalled elsewhere except perhaps in Ireland. One met it in every Balkan country and expert propaganda was poured continuously into the foreign ear, but probably Roumania beat the band. Her ceaseless cry, like the old Scotswoman's prayer, "Oh Lord take everything from everybody and gie it a' to me," had considerable effect in the Press throughout the world. Bulgaria, surrounded by Greeks, Serbians and Roumanians all pointing the finger of hate at her, found it hard to get a hearing and fared not too well.

Serbia, though well deserving of the fruits of victory

received an almost embarrassing portion and it remained to be seen whether Belgrade, then no more than a pig-jobbers' market town could assimilate the more highly cultured people of Croatia. The Prince Regent was rather nervous at the rapidity with which plums were falling into his mouth and his new kingdom thrust on him by the French. He would have preferred Croats, Slovenes and Montenegrins to graft themselves on to Serbia by self-determination. While the Catholic and Orthodox mixed well enough in adversity, the Croats of the Monarchy were apt to look down on the more rustic Serbs and promised to become a source of future discord.

Early in February 1919, I had taken advantage of a special train going north from Salonica with General Henrys, commanding the French *Armée d'Orient*, to send Bill Strutt¹ now attached to my Mission, on a prolonged tour of inspection of the Danube States as far as Fiume, if he could get there. This led to his being involved in a historic adventure. On receipt of alarming reports from Vienna I caught him at Venice with the following message:

"You will proceed at once to Eckhartsau and give Emperor and Empress moral support of British Government. They are stated to be in danger of their lives, to be suffering great hardships and lack of medical attendance. Endeavour by every possible means to ameliorate their condition." His first reaction was "What Emperor? and where the deuce is Eckhartsau?"

Eckhartsau he found was Franz Ferdinand's shooting box, 60 km. from Vienna and the former scene of many an imperial (and unsporting) holocaust of game on a vast scale. The Emperor Karl and his family had taken refuge there at the time of the Austrian revolution.

¹ Lieutenant-Colonel E. L. Strutt, Royal Scots.

Though a British doctor had already arrived at the Schloss, Strutt found that I had not exaggerated their plight. The Imperial family lacked food and lived chiefly on vegetables off the estate. They were continually insulted and threatened by returned soldiers, while Red Guards in armoured cars prowled round the park, though unable to enter owing to the state of the roads. Strutt organized a kind of defence and sent out a lorry-load of supplies from the Food Control in Vienna, putting the whole party of a hundred mouths on British rations. It was the first white bread they had seen for two years.

The political situation in Austria was getting worse and Strutt now received instructions from the War Office to advise the Emperor to fly to Switzerland, but with the warning that we could not guarantee his safety. Strutt had first himself to negotiate for his reception in Switzerland, which had already been previously refused. This done he made arrangements to smuggle the Emperor out in his second suit of uniform with a shaved moustache, disguised as an officer in the Royal Scots. But he reckoned without his host. The Emperor, unlike some potentates, refused absolutely to leave without the Empress and his family, and neither would go in disguise or "like a thief in the night."

At the same time Strutt received my instructions *en clair* to "hang on and not get off the map," which he rightly interpreted as meaning that the Emperor should stay on if possible and not be frightened into leaving as long as the country wanted him. But Renner's Jew Government in Vienna now formulated a measure that if (1) the Emperor and Empress would abdicate and renounce all rights, they could remain in Austria as private citizens; (2) If he should abdicate the Throne only he must be

exiled; (3) If he would abdicate nothing he would be interned at once under strict guard.

This brought matters to a head and Strutt set about secretly arranging for the Imperial train to come to a near-by wayside station and remove the family before the measure could pass into law. Then the Empress Zita, whom he described as the man of the party, refused to leave if there was any talk of abdication. She showed the same splendid courage and spirit as two other great Queens in adversity, Queen Elizabeth of Belgium and Queen Marie of Roumania. But at last Strutt, upon whom her fortitude and her charm seem to have made a deep impression, overcame her scruples and she left herself entirely in his hands. In this she showed wisdom and no doubt recognized Bill as a person of initiative and determination, a mountaineer to whom an obstacle was just something to be overcome.

Strutt went straight off and bearded Chancellor Renner in his office. "Stand up," he said truculently, "when I come in." Renner, a lieutenant in the Austrian Army, who had deserted to the Russians, stood obediently at attention. Strutt informed him that he was going to remove the Emperor to Switzerland, an announcement which was received with some relief. The Government were in daily fear lest something should happen to him and they should be called to account by the Entente. Strutt then wrote the Chancellor a letter ordering him to supply the Imperial train for a party of the British Food Commission, including several ladies, to proceed to Switzerland and to be followed by a second train some days later.

Renner said that the family and all the baggage must be searched, but this Strutt, in the name of the British Government, flatly refused to allow. Then the Govern-

ment, said Renner, would send a High Commissioner with the train. To this Strutt agreed, adding "And I will shoot him myself at the first sign of an incident." This official never materialized.

Strutt went off to make his final arrangements, but Renner called him up on the telephone and asked him to return. The Chancellor (now standing) at once said that the Emperor could not leave the country unless he abdicated. His Government would not allow it. The door ajar behind him left little doubt that the other members of the Government were listening in. Strutt asked what they would do, and was told that the Emperor would be interned at once. But Bill, ready for this, produced from his pocket and read out a telegram directed to the War Office demanding the immediate renewal of the blockade and the stoppage of all supply trains to Austria. He heard a muttered "Mein Gott!" from behind the door. This bluff brought Renner to his knees, and he finally agreed to let the Emperor and party leave unconditionally.

Did the Entente desire the abdication of the Hapsburgs? Would they have minded if the Emperor and his family had been murdered? I do not know to this day. Presumably no one would take the responsibility of a decision, so it was left to a junior officer on the spot to take it for them.

Flinging a parting insult at the Head of the State, Strutt left him and flushed with success and perhaps feeling rather berserk, picked up a British orderly at the Food Commission and drove to the now empty Schönbrunn Palace. Here he frightened the Red Guard on the gate into abandoning his cigarette, his rifle and his post and going into the Palace made a selection of the most valuable of the famous Gobelins with which he loaded his car and drove

back to Eckhartsau. The Emperor while appreciating this kind thought, afterwards returned them from Switzerland. I made the acquaintance of these wonderful tapestries later in the year as member of a commission to advise as to their being pawned abroad. Many had scarcely seen the light of day and had kept their brilliant colours. There was a notable Pomona series with gold thread running through the woof. They were all carefully stored, mended and tended by English housemaids.

Eventually the Imperial family and their belongings moved off in the Imperial train with the honours of war and a guard of a sergeant and six privates of the British Military Police, exactly half the British forces in Vienna. The Emperor wore full Field-Marshal's uniform and all behaved with becoming dignity and decorum. Last on the train, loaded to the Plimsoll mark, haversack stuffed with 2½ million crowns and the Empress's pearls in his trouser pocket, came the triumphant Strutt. His servant, pistol in hand, sat on a large trunk of jewels and an iron box of family records containing amongst other things the story of the Meyerling tragedy. As the train started, the Emperor said to Strutt: "After 700 years!" The Empress remarked, "My family has been turned out of France, Italy and Portugal,¹ I became an Austrian subject, and am now exiled from there. Tell me, Colonel, to what country do I belong?"

There was much curiosity but no hostile demonstrations and the party passed peacefully into Switzerland on the 25th of March.

Strutt proceeded to London where, however, his romantic adventures provoked little interest. At the War Office, the Director of Military Intelligence was opaque,

¹ Bourbon, Parma, Braganza.

at the Foreign Office Balfour was bored. Only to Eric Drummond, a good Catholic, was the sad fate of the Hapsburgs a matter for sympathetic concern.

After three moving months spent in "Prisoner of Zenda" fashion, Bill Strutt rejoined me at Constantinople. He learnt of the Emperor's death by wireless when in camp on the slope of Mount Everest at a height of 23,400 feet.

I had to make frequent absences from Salonica and generally returned to find some rift in the lute which required attention. My G.S.O. 1, Jim McConnel, was a dashing cavalry Lieutenant-Colonel of twenty-six, who had received rapid promotion in France and had two bars to his Military Cross as well as a D.S.O. won by disobeying orders and taking command of a French battalion, though the official record was somewhat different from this. He sometimes stepped into the breach where angels would have thought twice. Franchet liked him and called him *le Boy Scoot*. But his dealings with his opposite numbers, French and British, who were much older than himself, sometimes put him in a difficult position. There was a feeling that officers from the Western Front were apt to regard those at Salonica as "picnickers," which was quite groundless, as everyone realized that malaria was just as deadly as machine-gun bullets without entitling you to glory or even little gold wound stripes.

McConnel was no linguist, though later he picked up enough Turkish in a couple of months to command some Turkish cavalry doing police work. His mediocre French was a hindrance to my policy of smoothing over difficulties between the Allies informally, but he usually made the best of an opportunity and things were wont to happen

unexpectedly in the Near East. He is now trying to bring some common sense to bear on the National Fitness Movement, at which he has been working for the last ten years. He may succeed, as Lord Horder writes, that it is a privilege to introduce his recent book on the subject.

The British soldier had made his mark at Salonica and enjoyed a local popularity denied to other troops. This dated apparently from the Great Fire which had destroyed most of the town. The British were said to have put out the fire whilst their Allies pillaged the houses. Prices were high. I find myself writing to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff: "Living here is luxurious but expensive. You cannot buy an egg, but if you could it would be ninepence. I have to entertain a little and am asking for an allowance of £800 a year. It will be within the memory of the Treasury that I was £400 out of pocket over my American trip. . . . It is a pity events move so fast, one has not time to enjoy them."

Early in 1919 I was sent for to London to report, and travelled via Belgrade, Budapest, Vienna and finding conditions very bad owing to uncertainty as to peace terms, lack of food, fuel and transport and a general "Balkanizing" process that was advancing through Europe from the East. The War Office was already at its normal peace-time task, the manufacture of bricks without straw, and the rapid reduction of the Army abroad made it necessary to decide what commitments could be considered essential and what could be cut down.

Henry Wilson's grasp of the multifarious and changing strategic factors was extraordinary and his methods of expression clear and forceful. On the subject of Ireland he was always unyielding. Two years later his tragic murder on his own doorstep on a Sunday afternoon was

to cast a deep gloom over his many friends. No longer then in the Army, but a Member of Parliament for Ulster (and Black North), he was uncompromising to a degree. For months, even when Chief of the Imperial General Staff, he would not speak to the Prime Minister. Had he been in Russia this would have entailed his execution with that of his staff. As he had a host of loyal friends, so no doubt he had bitter political enemies. The most menaced man in England at the time, it was a mystery that he should have been without police protection when so many others who were in little danger were well guarded. Our house was close by in Chesham Street, but we were away on the day of the tragedy. Our servants heard the shots and saw the two assassins drive by in a victoria shooting at the crowd which collected and followed them. They were quickly secured by the public and unarmed police. Several people were wounded. It is problematical if they would have been caught in any other country. The murderers who though ex-soldiers, had some connexion with the Irish Republican Army were quickly tried and hanged in spite of a comprehensive plot to secure their escape. There was consternation in high places, but no cause for alarm. The assassin and the informer, indispensable to Irish politics, have no place in England.

Henry Wilson had extraordinary spirits and charm. His genial hilarity, even when things were going badly, was as proverbial as his extravagance in speech and writing. His diaries, while most interesting sidelights on the times, suffer from this exuberant style, and except amongst his friends their publication did his memory more harm than good.

Things were never dull when Henry was about and you could not travel with him without having adventures.

One winter before the war I went with him ostensibly to shoot the wild boar in Luxembourg, where we stayed with a friend, Le Gallais. Behind the curtains in his bedroom, Henry found an excited individual who wanted to sell him photographs of the German mobilization plan! We did not, however, "bite."

There are many stories told of him of which the following is typical. When he was Chief of the Imperial General Staff at the War Office he used to take a run in the Park before breakfast, with a bundle of newspapers, and scan them while he had a breather. For this outing he wore a suit of clothes which he prided himself on having had as a cadet at Sandhurst, old yachting shoes and a disgraceful cap. He was accosted one morning by a faultless city gent, who said: "Got *The Times* there, my man?" "Yessir," said Henry, springing up from his seat, scenting a joke. "Aha! give me one. Old soldier, I expect?" "Yessir," said Henry, "Rifle Brigade, sir." "Aha!" said the immaculate one, "good regiment, here's sixpence for you." Then rather impressed by Henry's height, he said, "Sergeant-major, perhaps?" "No, sir!" roared Henry with one of his diabolic guffaws, "Field-Marshal!" Convinced he had to deal with a dangerous madman the other took to his heels.

I was able at this time to air my views in other high places, with Foch and also Clemenceau, and urge the desirability of expedition in the settlement of Eastern Europe. I went to see "the Tiger" with Arthur Capel¹ who was a great friend of his and who had given him a Chinese statuette of ivory for his birthday. Capel had successfully carried through some difficult negotiations for the supply of English coal to France and enjoyed the

¹ The late Captain A. E. Capel.

confidence of both Governments. He had not a little to do with the formation of the Supreme War Council. Before talking business Clemenceau analysed the figure (a nude) which stood on his desk. He called it "*un véritable mélange de style. La tête nettement orientale, mais la poitrine fait penser aux femmes frêles de la Renaissance. Les hanches ont le cachet du Grand Siècle—ce sont des hanches à la Montespán. Le derrière est certainement celui d'une négresse. Tout cela paraît invraisemblable mais il est vrai,*" added the sportive octogenarian reflectively, joining his gloved finger tips, "*que j'ai connu une femme également anachronique et presque pareille à cette Chinoise—dans ma jeunesse.*" He loved old things and when exasperated by the imbecility of his contemporaries would turn to the glories of ancient Greece for solace. Duller and weightier matters we discussed in English which he spoke admirably.

It was always refreshing to meet Foch, than whom no more loyal ally existed on either side of the Channel, and to listen to his clear-cut appreciations. He would have no truck with the past and "if only's" did not exist for him. They only made him spit and say "*Bah! c'est l'histoire ça!*"

France in her travail had been fortunate in finding these two men, for without them she would have been lost. When Clemenceau was reluctantly admitted to power in November 1917 the military situation was desperate; part of the army had mutinied; and the defeatists were making themselves heard. In Foch, whom curiously enough, he neither liked nor trusted, Clemenceau found the one instrument capable of finishing the war in 1918.

Franchet d'Esperey was also in Paris extracting, I fancy, from Clemenceau authorization to hoist his flag on the Bosphorus, and we travelled to Trieste together, taking

ship in the *Duguay Trouin*, an old cruiser, for Cattaro and thence to Cetinje, as part of an Allied Commission of Inquiry into the legality of the recent elections in Montenegro and general conditions of that country and of Albania. These elections had been carried out in true fourteenth-century tradition and most of the opposition was in jail, where we interviewed them. At the same time there was a good deal of twentieth-century opera-bouffe (without the beauty chorus). King Nicholas whom nobody wanted as he had tried to make a clandestine peace and left the army with no orders at a critical time, thereby ensuring its being cut off and capitulating, was reported to be returning to Montenegro under the wing of Italy with a gang of stage conspirators. We urged the Paris Conference to publish the fate of this country before more blood was shed, also that of Albania, which we found in an even more restless condition, thanks to pressure from outside—Italians on the West, Yugoslavs from north and east and Greeks from the south.

CHAPTER XIII

ON THE BOSPHORUS

Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle
Are emblems of deeds that are done in their clime?
Where the rage of the vulture, the love of the turtle,
Now melt into sorrow, now madden to crime!

The Bride of Abydos—Byron.

CHAPTER XIII

TO steam through the Dardanelles to Seraglio Point and to see the mosques of Stamboul silhouetted against the dawn, their regiment of minarets like the spears of an invading army stuck in the ground to mark their advance, the Golden Horn packed with strange vessels, and the palaces of Pera and the Bosphorus gradually emerging against a background of dark hills, is one of the tourist thrills of the world. When we arrived in the *Duguay Trouin* on 9th February, 1919, the hills were picturesquely shrouded in white and the morning was clear and frosty. The battleships of the Allied fleets lying off the mouth of the Bosphorus looked like great watch-dogs, as indeed they were.

British General Headquarters had already established itself at Constantinople in December 1918, and General H. M. Wilson, with an Allied Commission, had taken over control of the Turkish police and gradually produced an orderly and healthy city. The British also proceeded with the disarmament of the 400,000 Turks still in the field. This was effected through the Turkish Ministry of War and worked smoothly, even the Nationalists under Kemal and Jemal Pasha sending in large consignments of breech-blocks and rifle-bolts.

Franchet d'Esperey made a state entry on horseback, all troops being out, but the effect was marred by the fact that General Allenby had done the same thing the day before. We managed to bring the two conquerors together for a talk, as "the Bull" was to leave the same day. He

looked very well and his crest had thickened. Admiral Calthorpe told me that he had completely pulverized the Turkish War and Foreign Ministers when he delivered his ultimatum. A regret that he was not remaining, registered in my diary, was justified by later events. There was a foot of snow on the ground and General Milne, who lived in a big house of Krupps at Therapia, was cut off from his General Headquarters except by water. Franchet d'Esperey took Enver Pasha's Palace at Ortakeui on the Bosphorus, evacuating Madame Enver, who was expecting a little Enver. I found a delightful little bijou residence between the two which housed myself and some of the staff. Cecil Howard, now my G.S.O. 1, brought out his wife and lived hard by. My wife came out later for a few weeks, one of my staff got engaged to an American teacher at the neighbouring Roberts College, and another took piano lessons. In fact we began to approximate to peace conditions.

There was, however, a great deal of tidying up to be done in Eastern Europe, and I was often on the move, but tried not to leave the two Commanders-in-Chief together. It was, as I wrote to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, like having two prima donnas on the stage together, and the play went much better if we could keep one in her dressing-room. Nominally General Milne commanded the Allied forces in Turkey in Europe and those operating in Asia Minor, whilst under him General Wilson commanded the troops of occupation of Turkey in Europe. But, super-imposed, Franchet d'Esperey commanded all troops in the Balkans including those in Turkey in Europe. Orders issued from London and those from Paris naturally differed in character, and led to numerous misunderstandings. The good sense of the

commanders generally liquidated these, but there were times when relations became strained and the Turks were peculiarly apt in taking advantage of them. The mistake was in allowing the French Commander to come to Constantinople where he had nothing to do and not unnaturally tried to assume the position of top-dog. The addition of Allied High Commissioners to the staff of cooks did little to improve the broth.

The little British Army of the Black Sea was now widespread. With detachments still on the Danube it garrisoned Batum and the Caucasus as far as Baku and joined hands with British troops from Mesopotamia at Krasnovodsk on the eastern shore of the Caspian, while small posts were established all over Turkey and Bulgaria for disarmament purposes. There is no better ambassador than the British soldier, and it would be difficult to speak too highly of the conduct and value of British troops during this period and I doubt if our prestige has ever stood so high. What we said went and it did not matter who said it as long as he wore a British uniform. I was told a typical story of a control post of a corporal and six men of the Hampshires which had long been left to their own resources in a village of the Dobrudja, that still unallotted territory in the Danube Delta, claimed by both Roumania and Bulgaria. An officer went one day and looked them up. He found the corporal making a tour of inspection of the village, a baby in his arms, followed by the Mayor and other notables. "Do you talk the language?" asked the officer. "Oh, no," replied the corporal, "but we get on all right." "Had any trouble here?" "Just one day," said the corporal, "when they heard the town was to be allotted to Roumania and that the frontier guards were coming across the river to take it over. All the men

gathered in the market-place with swords and old muskets." "What did you do?" asked the officer. "Oh!" said the corporal. "I just got up on a cart and told them I'd 'ave none of it!" They went back to their homes.

Somehow a rumour got about that we would enlist foreigners for the "British Colonial Army," and many applications were made, especially in Austria and Hungary, where our military representatives estimated their probable number in thousands including many doctors.

There were numerous instances of clashes avoided by the intervention of our officers. A first-class war between the new Republic of Georgia and Armenia was stopped by the initiative of a young officer with a Union Jack and a peaceful settlement arranged by Milne's Quartermaster General, who happened to be in the country on inspection. The Turks were still fighting Armenians and White Russians in the Caucasus and had to be disarmed and turned out of the country. Similarly hostilities between Georgia and the White Armies and between the Tartars of Azerbaijan and Armenia had to be liquidated. In addition to this our army was engaged in raising gendarmerie, re-establishing railway communications, reopening the oil pipe-line from Baku to Batum and assisting the American Armenian Relief Mission.

General Milne sent a division and a brigade to the Caucasus and gradually drew in his horns elsewhere, concentrating around Constantinople. Our Government at this time attached peculiar importance to the Caucasus not only for the oil supply, but to secure the rear of Denekin's Army, and to form a defensive line for India against Bolshevism. If the Bolshevists had free access to the Nationalists of India evil consequences were feared. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff warned me that if

this policy crystallized, it was proposed that I should take over command in the Caucasus and that I had better go and familiarize myself with the country.

Eager to get back to troops I paid a visit that summer to Tiflis and the Caspian. I went by destroyer, stopping on the way to see the situation in the Crimea and took the opportunity to drive round Sebastopol and to ride over the field of Balaklava where three famous regiments with which I had been connected took part in the battle—the 4th Hussars in the gallant but eccentric charge of the Light Brigade, and the 4th and 5th Dragoon Guards with the "Heavies." I followed the valley where Scarlett rode at the head of his Brigade, saying to his aide-de-camp: "What are all those funny pointed things on the ridge on our left?" "Thistles, sir," said the ready staff officer. But the thistles turned out to be the pennons of 2,000 Russian lancers coming over the ridge, and the Brigade had barely time to wheel left into line before the clash. So nice a thing was it that the Greys troop-leaders with their tails to the foe were still meticulously dressing their ranks according to the custom of the day, when the enemy was only forty yards away. Scarlett himself owed his life to being so tightly wedged amongst the Russians that no one could hurt him. A neat little pocket battle packed with incident. The Charge of the Light Brigade—which evoked from General Bosquet: "*C'est magnifique mais ce n'est pas la guerre*"—remains as a glorious monument to the faulty transmission of orders, while the staunchness of our infantry was immortalized in "the thin Red Line" of the 93rd. A few years ago, after I had described this affair at an Old Comrades' dinner of the 5th Dragoon Guards and Inniskilling Dragoons held on Balaklava night, a young man came to me and asked, "Were you really there, sir?"

Landing at Batum we drove along the famous littoral and saw the palaces of Russian nobles at Sotchi and Gagri, and the tea-gardens, hedged with hydrangea and managed by Chinese, that supplied the whole Russian Army. Arriving at Tiflis I got the impression that in spite of our excellent gendarmerie and control posts, the country was pretty shaky. The Russian Revolution followed by Wilson's fourteen points, had been too much for it. The Chief Interpreter to our Headquarters at Tiflis was Prince Lucien Murat, one of the big landowners of the Black Sea Littoral whose home had been gutted by the Bolsheviks, and who had fled for his life pursued by his own retainers, and was now glad to earn 600 francs a month. I knew his wife in Paris, the charming and talented Princess Marie Murat, whose brother, the Duc de Rohan, had died gloriously at the head of his battalion in the true spirit of French chivalry. Murat said you could trust no one and the ground was moving under our feet.

After a few days in Tiflis we took the Great Military Road through the Caucasus to Vladikavkaz, passing Thamar's lonely castle on a crag of the Dariel Gorge. Here, in the twelfth century this lovely sadistic Queen of Georgia, was said to dispose of her lovers by throwing them down into the stormy waters of the Terek. And so to Kislovodsk, where jaded Grand Dukes were wont to revive their flagging energies at the mineral springs. Returning we went by train to Baku, on the Caspian, the economic and strategic centre of Central Asia and a tempting prize to any marauder for the place simply oozed oil. So did the people. I was shown Tartar millionaires who could not write their names but on whose plots gushers had been found. Their women-folk sported daylight diamonds and gushed too.

In the spring of 1918 there had been a three-fold competition for the place. The Germans from Georgia, the Turks under Nuri, and a British contingent under Dunster-ville (Kipling's Stalky) from Enzeli, supporting Russians and Armenians. The Turks won, routing the somewhat feeble pro-ally forces from a strong position. Baku had a sinister reputation and 20,000 Christians had been murdered in the streets during the previous year. I reported that to try and repatriate the 400,000 available Armenians into Turkish Armenia before the Turks had been ejected and the country properly policed by Allied troops would be merely to provide more material for massacres and that if no great Power would accept a mandate for Armenia she would cease to exist.

We sailed a boat on the oily Caspian and saw the population bathing by hundreds *en famille*, mother naked.

An old carpet dealer here, who sold me some beautiful rugs from Shiraz, Bokhara and Ispahan, had a queer story that half a century ago there had been in a certain wild tribe in the mountains of Persia a god without legs or arms who sat on an altar and talked English. That the news reached London and an expedition was sent which purchased the said god and took him to England where he was known to be of good family. However, it is a country where anything might happen, as in Azerbaijan where chain mail is still worn on occasions and duels fought kneeling with two-handed swords.

Actually life and property in the Caucasus were probably safer during British occupation than they have ever been before or since, and though there was grumbling at control the people were glad of security. It is worthy of note that the nomad Tartars used to fight their way to graze their flocks on the uplands of the Karabak, an

annual migration, the cessation of which would spell famine and distress. This was carried out under active service conditions and Russia used to devote two divisions to the biennial movement. For the Karabak was a danger spot, the cradle of the Armenian race and coveted by the lawless Tartars. But our presence and prestige and a few control posts provided by the excellent seasoned troops under General Cory were enough to keep the peace.

Across the Caspian lay Krasnovodsk, now held by a detachment from the Mesopotamian Army, whence runs the railway like a riband across the yellow Steppes to Merv and Tashkend. From Tiflis I made another excursion to Erivan in Armenia and saw Mount Ararat, a beautiful peak snow-covered but it looked very steep and a poor landing-place for an Ark of any tonnage.

On our return journey we revisited the Crimea and stopped at Yalta, an enchanting spot in the pine-woods, and went over the Tsar's cellars, safer under the Bolsheviks than the Whites. There were seven miles of wine, of which we sampled about half a mile, and bought some good light hock for our Mess at Constantinople. Our chief taster was a spectacular Cossack officer allotted to me as interpreter. Where I drank half a glass he would finish the bottle, and it seemed to have no effect upon him except to make him if possible prouder of himself than ever. He wore four crosses all the same, and if asked what they were he would say, "It is our St. George's Cross given for great bravery. It is the same as your Victoria Cross, only better. I have it already four times." He was murdered in Odessa not long afterwards.

The over-rapid demobilization of our Army and financial retrenchment were chiefly responsible for the abandonment of this Caucasian policy. Our troops were with-

drawn from the country leaving only a small garrison at Batum for a time. This half-hearted policy of interference was of no service to Denekin, and the Caucasus relapsed into a welter of confusion and bloodshed. I fear a great many of our friends fared ill.

The Italians were eager to occupy the country and the Paris Conference agreed, but with Denekin falling back and the country going Red they eventually abandoned the idea. In this they showed wisdom for it is unlikely that they would have been able to counteract the Moslem and Bolshevik forces at work. In July 1919 there was a proposal of French intervention to the tune of 12,000 troops to save the Armenians from extinction, but this likewise was relinquished. Although President Wilson sent a threatening note to the Sublime Porte, an individual gesture to which he was somewhat prone and which his colleagues of the Big Four naturally resented, the Americans would supply no troops for plebiscite areas. It became, indeed, increasingly doubtful if the United States would ratify the peace treaty at all and prospects of an American Mandate for Armenia or Turkey in Europe receded to vanishing point.

The dismemberment of Europe and the convulsions resulting therefrom were now a source of grave anxiety to those in close contact, though the pressing need of settlements did not seem apparent to the great hive of people employed on the Peace Conference in Paris. They were indeed having a fine time at other people's expense. "*Pourvu que ça dure*" was the *mot d'ordre*. Paris had never been so gay and reckless. After dining with Mr. Lloyd George one night I went to a ball with Miss Megan, a brilliant affair. Everyone of note was there and a good time was had by all: as Talleyrand said at a similar gather-

ing, the Congress of Vienna, "*Le Congrès ne marche pas, il danse.*"

It always seemed to me a mistake to choose Paris as the place of European settlement. The atmosphere there was too hot, war-like, and hectic, and life was too much of a holiday. Some duller place like Geneva or the Hague would probably have led to quicker and saner solutions; and Woodrow Wilson might then have presided, with what result one can only conjecture.

Revolutions, self-determination, the breakdown of communications and hasty demobilizations had resulted in great unrest, misery and even famine in Europe, leaving some countries, notably Austria and Hungary, in a critical condition and exposed to the deadly Red Wind now blowing from the East.

On learning that I was starting next day for the Balkans a Frenchman said, "*Mais pourquoi? Les Balkans arrivent chez nous: ça commence à la Porte Maillot.*" Indeed, once away from Paris one plunged into confusion.

It was increasingly difficult to travel in Eastern Europe. After one of these journeys I wrote home, "Communications instead of improving are getting worse. Beyond Vienna one launches into a no-man's-land where time-tables are unknown. People steal rolling-stock and live in trains to alleviate the "*crise de logement.*" The so-called Orient Express from Belgrade to Sofia, a distance of 350 km., and a nine-hours' run in peace, now takes forty-eight hours if you are lucky enough to coax an engine from the Bulgarians on their side of the frontier, but usually the journey takes sixty hours, and the transit of goods is calculated in weeks. People seldom arrive anywhere with their baggage unless they are privileged enough to have an armed guard for it. At the moment there is no other

means of travelling. The roads are such as to preclude motoring. Snow or mud on the aerodromes and cloud on the Balkan mountains make flying impossible nine days out of ten. I shall come back by diligence."

My flying experiences had not been encouraging. I started one day to fly from Belgrade piloted by a colonial in his 'teens. His first exploit was to cut off his engine and dive down from three thousand feet almost into the Danube, and then to "zoom" up again in a cloud of geese and duck. He turned and laughed delightedly at me. I shook my fist at him and wrote on a tablet, "I forbid you to play the fool like that!" But he only grinned. It was fine fun putting the wind up a General! When we got near the Balkan mountains we ran into mist, and after cruising round for some time he wrote: "Don't know where we are, do you?" Did I? "Will come down and find out," and signed to me to take off my goggles. For the second time I said what prayers I knew, but the youth contrived a neat pancake landing in a field not far from the base of the mountains and near a road. Soon a countryman came along driving a good pair of horses, and he gave us our position on the map. "All right," said the boy, "I know now. Jump in!" "Not me," I said. "I am going in this cart," and I did, to Nish, where I was able to get a French car and proceed on my way.

On the above-mentioned journey I spent three days at Vienna waiting for a train. There had not been one for a week owing to peevishness of officials and lack of coal. I once had a motor-car stolen from the train I was in at Belgrade, but happened to see it being shunted off and stopped our train and recovered it. This sabotage of communications is a recognized step and first objective in the offensive of Communism.

The Protector of Hungary, Admiral Horthy, was greatly concerned at the state of affairs for it was known that the Communists of Milan, Moscow, Vienna and Budapest were planning a concerted movement to cut off south-eastern Europe from the rest of the world and bolshevize it. I had reported this early in the year and advocated Allied occupation of the two capitals as a preventive measure. But events were allowed to take their course, and in the spring of 1919 the strain was too much for Hungary, which broke suddenly and went Soviet under a murderous Jew called Bela Kun.

As the disbanded Magyar troops had taken their rifles to their homes, a Red Army of seven divisions was soon forthcoming. The Roumanians itching for plunder, volunteered to quell the rising, but they were still only partially mobilized and for racial and humane reasons it seemed unwise to let them loose on Hungary. After consultation with Franchet d'Esperey I reported to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff that there were available sufficient Allied divisions to deal with the matter without using them. General Smuts who was the "emergency man" of the Paris Conference, was dispatched to Budapest to parley with the Bolsheviks and try and induce them to be good and to evacuate the debated strip of territory between Roumania and Hungary that they had illegally occupied. I was at Belgrade and was instructed to meet Smuts at Budapest, but could not make it in the time, arriving the following day. The Bela Kun Government told him to mind his own business and he went back to Paris after only a very short stay. I was told that he was gratified at being cheered as he drove through the streets, but a cynical Frenchman said it was because he had a red band round his hat. Budapest was in a parlous condition.

Armoured cars with red flags full of truculent Bolshies dashed about the streets, a lot of looting was going on, and there was some settling of old scores at night. A Red advance into Czechoslovakia, however, was arrested by the stern and energetic action of General Snederek, the ex-legionary, who was put in charge of the frontier troops and executed several of his officers for leaving their posts.

After Budapest one expected Vienna to succumb and if Vienna, why not Berlin? But in spite of their sufferings the Viennese did not seem destined for Communism. Their natural *Gemüthlichkeit* and their splendid police force of 6,000 men, under Herr Schober—who was later Prime Minister—saved them from this ugly fate. Finally Franco-Roumanian troops were marched to Budapest and the Regency established under Horthy. The aftermath of these events was rather painful, especially for the Jews.

I spent some time between Budapest and Vienna reporting on various local grievances, hardships and illegalities and working for a fair deal. In spite of representations, Austria was to be left with a big capital and insufficient country to support it, a head without a body, and would inevitably become a charge on the parish. Greedy and vindictive neighbours had the ear of Paris, and insisted that she should be bled white. During a critical economic period the Jugo-Slavs refused to fulfil their obligations to Austria and Hungary in food and coal, although the Entente accepted the responsibility for the payments. But no one who had seen the devastation of Serbia could blame the Serbs for letting the Austrians starve. Fortunately for the people the winter had been a mild one, but the old in Vienna were dying off fast from undernourishment. There was no fuel and streams of people were to be seen every evening coming in from the forest pushing

barrows or carrying bundles of sticks. The children were being fed by the Allies, the British taking them up to six years and the Americans from six to fifteen. It was impossible to feed them all, but the Americans were supposed to feed 250,000 a day, and our own organization was rapidly growing. A doctor told me that most of the children were too emaciated for vaccination. The kroner was then at 1,050 to the £ and the Jews were said to be hastening the débâcle of credit whilst the "schiebers" (profiteers) revelled in the situation.

The opera still went on and we patronized it whenever possible. Perhaps I was starved for music, but the performances seemed more wonderful than ever, and the orchestra, could it have been sent to America at that time, might have raised a great deal of money for the State. The audience was mostly composed of Jews who seemed to be still able to indulge their passion for music in this poverty-stricken land. No hanging up of harps here. Theatres began between four and five and had to be over by eight-thirty. Sometimes artistes would come back and sup with us at Sachers Hotel. It was depressing to find soldiers wearing war medals begging for food outside the hotels but conquered countries had no monopoly of this and one got used to it in London later.

Austria suffered acutely for two decades and though to-day she has at last balanced her budget by relentless compression of expenditure, her internal social conditions are little better. Living is expensive and there is much genteel poverty. Deaths outnumber births, and there is the highest suicide-rate known.

Budapest, Prague, Warsaw, Bucharest, Belgrade and Sofia were also in my orbit of supervision. Our military missions in these places did excellent work, but some of

the officers were apt to be a prey to propaganda, especially of the female type and inclined to become partisans of the country in which they found themselves. Only in Warsaw my old friend and fire-eater, Carton de Wiart, had no illusions about Poles and told them so, and seemed to enjoy no less popularity on that account.

Pilsudski, big, fierce, granite-faced Legionnaire, I found rattling the sabre, convinced that another war was necessary to consolidate the country. Paderewski, now Poland's Prime Minister, and Foreign Minister, was still at the Peace Conference in Paris, wheedling from it by his charm and his diplomacy every possible concession for his country. It was strange that these two great patriots who had worked so long for Poland in different spheres should never have met, until Paderewski came to Warsaw at the end of the war. After Peace was eventually signed, the two forces found it impossible to work together. Pilsudski the romantic exile and ex-convict, the tough maker of Legions, self-centred, arrogant and suspicious, had nothing in common with the Darling of the Gods but his love of country. Paderewski after months of desperate endeavour retired completely from public life. Having dissipated his own fortune and that of Madame Helena in the cause, he returned to the piano at the age of over sixty years.

I stayed some time in the lovely town of Prague to profit by the wisdom of Professor Mazaryk, whom I regarded as the most far-seeing of the new rulers of Europe. Having already been associated with him in discussions in America I had a great respect for his sagacity. He had led his Czechs through Siberia as Moses led the Israelites. But the Czechs lived in 109 railway trains, controlling 3,000 miles of railway, and were armed with machine-guns and

their manna was money, which the Professor thanks to his American associations was able to supply. His father lived and died a serf and he himself began life as a blacksmith. Strangely different in character from most of his race, philosopher, free-thinker (in the best sense) and courageous realist, Mazaryk held the country in the hollow of his hand. But the God of the Czechs at the time was Woodrow Wilson.

One of the post-war phenomena at that time was a noticeable lack of production throughout Europe, and a disability to work. This was true even in England and France. Soldiers who had been at the front for years lost their power of application, everything had been done for them. A few hectic hours of danger perhaps once or twice a week, but an eight hours' day of steady work was a thing forgotten and not easy to pick up again. This was even more the case in the semi-savage countries of the Balkans where war had now raged for seven years. Serb, Bulgar and Turk, all shelved the problem. The Serb solution of the economic riddle was to keep a large army mobilized, the Roumanian the same. The Bulgars and Turks would have liked to but we would not let them. I found actual instances, where labour would perform only half its normal task for no apparent reason except that it was tired and a continual prey to strikes and disorders.

As an example of little things that interest the General Staff I find myself writing from Bulgaria after discussing the low output in the Pernic coal mines: "The support given to the Government by our Mission has led to increased confidence on the part of the peasantry who are now surrendering more grain. Heavy snow and wet weather presage a good harvest, the birth-rate of lambs is above the average, there is sufficient coal to keep the

railways going, the people have food and fuel and we have no fear of Bolshevism for the present."

The inequalities and inconveniences consequent on the new frontiers were numerous. The town of Tzaribrod in Bulgaria remains in my mind as an instance. It had been allotted to Serbia and when I visited it was almost empty, for the Bulgarians had dutifully evacuated. But the Serbs would not take over what they regarded as a purely Bulgarian town and after a time the Bulgars drifted back and resumed their normal life, even starting a hospital there for Russian refugees. Yet taken all round the Wilson frontiers approximated more nearly to a true ethnographic solution than Europe had ever known before.

The year 1919 closed badly. Ireland was troublesome and there were prospects of serious industrial unrest in England. Our unsolved problems abroad were numerous and we were at war with Afghanistan. The Titan was getting weary.

On my return to Constantinople I found that though the Allied staffs were friendly enough, our relations with the French Commander-in-Chief had not improved. Admiral de Robeck had arrived as High Commissioner, but he and Franchet d'Esperey would not meet, each considering that the other should call first. Nor would they accept my invitation to dine and meet each other. The French General was also said to be further upset because Marshal Foch had been told by King George that he, Franchet d'Esperey, was anti-British. Generals Milne and Franchet d'Esperey had not met for weeks, but Milne had good reasons for holding aloof and it was only thanks to his firmness that we were able to retain our dominant position in the capital. After four years our co-operation was wearing threadbare, and it was a real gala for the Allied

staffs to see Uncle George and Desperate Frankie kissing each other in front of a massed parade when the former received the *accolade* from the latter.

In the meantime life on the Bosphorus was agreeable enough, and I never tired of the beauty and interest of that lovely waterway. As usual the British settled down as if they were there for keeps. There was diversion in plenty: hounds (ready to hunt anything) at Maslak and in Asia Minor, polo, cricket and football, clubs and dances, and for the less active like myself, excellent sea-fishing and sailing. The comic antics of a bear cub which we had brought from the Caucasus helped to entertain us. On Christmas Day Mishu was given a glass of port and becoming obstreperous was relegated to the little garden to recover. But he tried his favourite trick of walking along the railing which separated it from the Bosphorus and not being quite sober, lost his balance and fell in with a yell and a splash and was carried off by the swift current. A boat was hastily procured and sent in pursuit, but in the meantime he was rescued by the Lazi crew of an archaic Turkish fishing-boat who at first thought they had found a dog and then the Devil. When we broke up house we handed him over to the *Royal Sovereign* to bring home, and he spent many years in the bear-pit in Regent's Park.

I purchased a small yacht and explored. In addition I was allotted a motor-boat with a Turkish naval officer in command, and could reach either Commander-in-Chief or the High Commissioner on board the *Iron Duke* by water.

For a change we sometimes went to Prinkipo, those delectable islands on which I reported as being too good for a conference with the Bolsheviks. (The Bolshevik smelt a rat and would not accept the invitation.) A large

number of families of Russian refugees lived on the islands, mostly in penury, but undaunted, charming people many of whom had never before known anything but luxury, now grateful for a cake of soap or a packet of cigarettes. Many of them were already hard at work developing their native talents towards making a living and whatever they took up they seemed to do well. The Russian women were especially admirable in adversity.

But I was never left at my headquarters for long, and in writing an appreciation of the services of my G.S.O. I note that, "out of his seven months with me he has been left in charge of the Mission for four."

At the end of 1919 I made another tour of "the outposts." This time we left Constantinople in state, Franchet d'Esperey, Tom Hohler, the new High Commissioner for Budapest, Sir Harry Lamb, who had been with me since Salonica, my wife and myself. We spent a day at Adrianople, where the cunning old Vali, a Cretan and head of the "Autonomous Thrace" movement, organized a great demonstration and we had a triumphal procession through the town. In view of the now well-known Greek pretensions in Thrace no Greek flags were allowed, but the Greeks as usual were the most enthusiastic and noisy and claimed to be the most numerous section of the populace.

At Sofia there was a similar pageant but composed entirely of French troops, the Bulgars maintaining a sullen aloofness. Franchet d'Esperey, for whom a house had been taken, called on the King for the first time. This was done with pomp. A squadron of *mes Spahis*, who had captured Skoplje and forced the surrender of the 11th Bulgarian Corps, accompanied him, and remained mounted at the Palace during the interview. This seemed in doubtful taste. The King in returning the visit after lunch made

his way on foot with an aide-de-camp and ignoring the important guard of honour, horse and foot, walked quickly into the house. Bad news from Odessa recalled Franchet d'Esperey to Constantinople. My wife and Hohler took the Orient Express for Budapest, but were derailed and caused us a good deal of anxiety until we heard they were unhurt. I proceeded to Warsaw and Prague but found little to chronicle except that, "the longer I do this job the more insular I become."

CHAPTER XIV

AGONY IN SOUTH RUSSIA

God rest you ; peaceful gentlemen, but give us leave to pass,
We go to dig a nation's grave as great as England was.
For this Kingdom and this Glory and this Power and this Pride
Three hundred years it flourished—in three hundred days it died.
Kipling.

CHAPTER XIV

SOON after my return to Constantinople came an interlude. There was a mess to be cleared up in South Russia, and as Head Housemaid to the Near East, I was dispatched to Novorossisk.

No one had as yet guessed the answer to the riddle of Bolshevism. As long as we were at war with Germany it was obviously politic to try and maintain some sort of Eastern Front in Russia to prevent the Germans exploiting Russian resources or transferring German troops to the West. There seemed a good opportunity for this in the spring of 1918, for the Czech Army Corps in Siberia had met with great success and increased its strength to 120,000 men along the Volga and the Kama Rivers. Under this screen a large concentration could be carried out. Acting under instructions from the War Office I had as already stated urged this policy in a conference held on the subject in Washington in July 1918. We found an unexpected stumbling-block in President Wilson, who objected to Japanese intervention, and only grudgingly allowed some United States Marines to show the flag in Murmansk and Vladivostock. As time went on the problem became more confused and so difficult that the Great Ones generally ignored it altogether. Perhaps the President was right, for the whole of Siberia between the Volga and Vladivostock became a salad of warring communities and factions mostly inspired by the doctrine of self-determination. The Czechs soon got tired of fighting. Courted by both Whites and Reds they adopted a neutral

attitude which might be summed up in the words of a famous star: "Ay tank Ay go home."

Once the Germans were out of the war we found ourselves intervening in Russian internal affairs with the natural result of consolidating opposition against "foreign capitalist invasions." We were indeed trying to bayonet a bacillus—to combat an idea with armed force. For Bolshevism was a microbe and as contagious as typhus. It attacked unexpectedly strong organisms. The Cossacks, who owned their land and should have been the backbone of the counter-revolutionaries, had the seeds of the disease before they had returned to their homes from the war. A Russian regiment that had been brigaded with the Foreign Legion on the Western Front and had acquitted itself well passed through Constantinople on its way to join Denekin. The French Colonel who had commanded the brigade happened to be there, and went on board ship to greet his old comrades. He said to me afterwards: "There is something wrong with them; they don't look like the same men." Arrived at the Caucasus front, they murdered their officers and went over to the Reds. We had similar disagreeable experiences in North Russia, while at Odessa the French fleet showed signs of contamination. No wonder the Entente Governments were half-hearted and vacillatory in their support of the White Russians. Our efforts at Murmansk were abortive and it was finally decided to withdraw from that area and concentrate on supporting the Whites in the Caucasus under Denekin with material and instructional staffs only, and not with troops.

When I visited Ekaterinodar early in April 1919 with General Milne hopes ran high and the situation on the map was distinctly favourable to the Whites. We spent the day with Denekin and his Government discussing the situ-

ation. One could not but have a great admiration for this stout old soldier, on whom command had devolved after the death of his great friend, Kornilov, whose two children he still had with him. Denekin had been fighting hard since 1914 and had commanded the famous Iron Division and later an Army Corps. He and Kornilov and their associates were imprisoned by the Bolshevists in Bykhov whence they broke out in November 1917 and made their way to the Don Cossack country where with General Alexeyev they organized the first anti-Bolshevist force, the Volunteer Army. He was a man of single purpose and strong character with a good sense of humour, but overweighted by his political surroundings, the confusion and ramifications of which would have baffled a Lloyd George. The Chief of the British Mission with him was General Briggs,¹ one of Milne's Corps Commanders, himself renowned as a dashing leader (he once commanded the Imperial Light Horse), who had thrown himself heart and soul into the movement and been of great service to the White Army. We finished a day of discussion with the customary banquet, very well done, and spectacular Cossack dancing (we were sending physical training instructors to these people, most of whom were acrobatic dancers). The French at the time were not popular with the White Russians. The unfortunate French liaison officer had had no news for thirteen days and was unable to refute current statements that the Clemenceau Government had fallen, the Fleet mutinied, and that France was enjoying a revolution! The White Army got all its news from the Moscow wireless and although we had sent them a high-powered set it is doubtful whether it was ever working.

¹ General Sir Charles Briggs.

After dinner Denekin toasted the British in generous terms as the sole people who had come to the aid of the White Armies. To which Milne replied tactfully in the name of the Allies. The French colonel, reduced to pulp, was very grateful to him.

The French, though they could not fail to have some sympathy with an anti-monarchist rising that smacked of the French Revolution, were actually anti-Bolshevist, but at the same time anti-Denekin. They thought Denekin a reactionary in close touch with the Germans, who in the event of his success, would be allowed to exploit the resources of Russia. They had no consistent policy but who could blame them? Our own Government was equally confounded. Churchill at the War Office, always combative, was still sending war material to Denekin, while Lloyd George was parleying with Moscow. There was a total lack of co-ordination of effort. Franchet d'Esperey favoured a *cordon sanitaire*, and had objected to his men being sent to Odessa at all. The grievance of the White Russians against the French dated from the evacuation of that port. With one and a half French and two Greek Divisions and strong Polish and Volunteer brigades, the French after proclaiming their responsibility for the defence of Odessa, made an armistice with the Bolsheviks and ordered the evacuation of the town at forty-eight hours' notice. The Whites were unable to move a brigade which they had in the town and lost an enormous amount of stores. This action was always an enigma to me. Under circumstances which required decision and determination Franchet d'Esperey who was in command on the spot was the last man to throw in his hand. I can only believe that there were other motives, probably secret instructions

from Paris of which we knew nothing. The effect was deplorable.

Although the spirit at the front impressed one favourably and Denekin proposed on receipt of a new draft of 75,000 men to occupy Tzaritzin and to join hands with Koltchak, the condition in the rear of his Army filled me with misgivings. The wharves at Novorossisk, a commodious grain port organized by the Germans, were congested with British war material, and the only labour available seemed to be our Turkish prisoners and 150 Russian officers who were helping themselves from a ship. Writing at the time I said, "The sloth and ineptitude which characterizes all the rear services of this Army are here fully apparent. It is difficult to conceive the Denekin Army ever meeting with success, where so little energy and efficiency is displayed behind the lines. His only hope lies in the possibility of the Bolsheviks being worse served." But the Bolsheviks with all their inefficiency were driven by the inexorable and furious energy of one Trotsky.

The offensive of the White Armies from the south in the summer of 1919 was duly launched, and met with great success. Their numbers swelling with each victorious step, rose from sixty thousand to a hundred and sixty thousand. By the middle of October they had taken Kiev, Orel and Tzaritzin and were masters of the coalfields in the Donetz Basin. They claimed to hold a million square kilometres of the country and to have liberated seventy-five million people. High hopes were held by those who did not know their Russia that Moscow would soon be in their grasp. Denekin indeed had actually issued orders for the advance on the capital and the panic-stricken Bolsheviks were preparing to evacuate their Government to Nishni-Novgorod.

But this proved to be the high-water mark of the invasion. The other White offensives had failed to synchronize. Admiral Koltchak in Siberia was already in full retreat and the Poles on the Dnieper who had joined in the advance suddenly suspended operations and allowed the transfer of large hostile forces to Denekin's front. It had become obvious too that the movement made no appeal to the people, and with disaffection in his ranks and hostile risings in his rear, Denekin was driven back again to the Don and the Crimea with heavy losses from battle, sickness and desertion.

Rebel bands in the Ukraine now assumed considerable proportions. Makhno, a truculent but popular bandit, who fought both sides impartially, was credited with a force of 40,000 men. There was a legend that he had the Tsar (already long dead) with him in his train and a white bejewelled hand was stretched from the window of a closed carriage to be kissed by the credulous at way-side halts. Petlura, a Ukrainian partisan, was another thorn in Denekin's side, whilst marauding Green Guards composed of rebels and deserters began to spring up everywhere. In February the Whites found themselves unable to hold Odessa and the town went through its third evacuation, and this time Allied shipping did not arrive in time to save a tragedy. Makhno threatened Denekin's General Headquarters at Taganrog and the Greens, now grouped as the "Black Sea Soviet Army" became a standing menace to his base at Novorossisk.

Under stress of circumstances various political concessions such as recognition of the independence of Poland and the Border States, had been extracted from Denekin by Sir Halford Mackinder, the envoy of the British Government and later (too late indeed) High Commis-

sioner. In exchange the British Government had undertaken to continue its material assistance and to evacuate the families of those now serving at the front. This humane measure was necessary as by February 1920 the whole Army was again in retreat. Unable to hold the line of the Kuban River, cut off from the bases organized in the Crimea, with officers who refused to obey and soldiers who refused to fight, with the Don Cossacks and the Volunteers at open enmity, Denekin's Army came streaming back on Novorossisk in a demoralized condition, a prey to dark panic relieved by flashes of heroism, but all intent on somehow or other escaping from their ill-fated country.

Such was the condition of affairs when I left Constantinople by destroyer for Novorossisk to take charge of the situation. I was accompanied by a transport carrying a battalion (2nd Royal Scots Fusiliers) which was to ensure the immediate safety of our base. The weather was already rough and the destroyer beat the transport by several hours, and by the time the latter arrived in the bay, a blizzard was blowing, and for two days she was unable to land the troops. At this time the conditions on shore were critical, the Novorossia Reds threatening the unprotected town, while several bands of Green Guards (equally poisonous) lurked in the vicinity. Fortunately it was too cold to fight, and the severity of the blizzard kept everyone under cover. The sick and wounded in the hospital trains suffered terribly and many were frozen stiff. Typhus was rife. As usual the nurses showed great devotion. Many of them were ladies of good family. They shaved their heads and wore white overalls with a large red cross on the breast, and knee boots.

I found the situation of the Volunteer Army desperate

and their success now quite out of the question. They were falling back on what was rapidly becoming a hostile country and might easily suffer a *débâcle*. The continuance of the struggle was compromising the whole political future of South Russia and depriving the Cossack States of any hope of preserving their independence under the ægis of the Great Powers. Although no Cossacks had as yet gone Red, the Kuban had already ceased to fight, while the Don and Terek Cossacks were lukewarm and suspicious.

I cabled home that in my opinion nothing was to be gained by prolonging the war and as far as we were concerned there was much prestige to be lost. Also that Denekin would never give in of his own accord, but that the Entente should intervene with armistice proposals to both sides. If this step could not be taken, Denekin was still in a position to break away and that we should let him know that we could no longer assist his operations, but that if he discontinued the struggle we would do our best to convey those of his army who wished to go to a place of safety. This last measure I felt we were in honour bound to take.

These alternatives were put to Denekin who indignantly rejected the first but eventually was obliged to accept the second, with the proviso that those who volunteered to continue the struggle in the Crimea should be given an opportunity of doing so.

As I had already reported to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, ten months earlier, from the moment we decided to support Denekin we should have had a High Commissioner with him who would have made our assistance contingent on his adopting lines of policy and strategy of which we approved, for Denekin's reactionary

nature and his slogan of "Great Russia One and Indivisible" had compromised his cause. The High Commissioner, Sir Halford Mackinder, well acquainted with the Bolshevik problem, having studied it already from the Roumanian and Polish angles, might have been able to do this and combine the efforts of the three countries. But he was sent out too late to do anything but guarantee the evacuation of dependants of the men in the field.

The Eastern Quay, the British portion of the base at Novorossisk, was by now thoroughly well organized, and clothing, arms and equipment were housed there for 200,000 men as well as much foodstuff. I found my old friend Percy¹ (once Baumgartner), the Chief of Staff of the Mission, in charge. Most of the personnel, some 1,500 officers and men, had been gathered at the front by General Holman,² with the idea of forming a fighting rear-guard for the retreating White Armies. This chivalrous attitude had to be abandoned, as it was never intended that our instructors and quartermasters should take an active part in the fray and the consequences of it might have been far-reaching.

On the evening of the second day, the wind suddenly dropped, and the transport which had been uncomfortably cruising up and down outside was able to tie up and land the troops. The battalion took up a position round the British enclave, and at once dug themselves in, forming a horseshoe chain of strong points on the slope above. With good wire entanglements and a couple of guns on the railway line, we could not be rushed either by friend or foe, and no one could approach the quays

¹ Now Major-General Sir Jocelyn Percy.

² Now Lieutenant-General Sir Herbert Holman.

without close scrutiny or embark on one of our ships without a pass from the efficient Keyes,¹ our political agent.

Communications were compromised by the fact that a copy of the cypher used by the Mission had been lost, stolen or strayed at Taganrog three weeks previously, although the cypher was still in use. I ordered a Court of Inquiry into this matter, but never got to the bottom of it as the principal witness blew his brains out, and the next useful one got on a ship and disappeared. I could not but wonder if some of our officers had not been with the Russians too long.

Novorossisk is surrounded by low hills and easily defensible and trenches had been prepared for occupation. But in spite of repeated requests and promises the couple of good regiments required to hold these trenches were never sent by Denekin, or if sent, never took up their positions. The result was that instead of an orderly embarkation spreading over a fortnight or three weeks, during which time ships could have gone to Constantinople or the Crimea and come back to be reloaded and everyone could have been got away, on the Russian quays there was a stampede and many thousands of civilians and troops had to be left behind though the British were able to evacuate all registered refugees who presented themselves.

The arrival of the fleet and some transports under Admiral Sir "Mike" Seymour, now well experienced in evacuations, was the signal for the embarkation of refugees to begin. The Russian ships used the quays in the main harbour.

Denekin's trains—everyone lived in the wagons-lits—pulled into sidings to the west of the town some three

¹ Brigadier-General Terence Keyes.

miles away. I went at once to see him with Holman, and we held a long conference on the liquidation of the present and plans for the future. He was admirably calm and collected, but furious at the idea of any compromise with the Reds. The only bitterness he showed was in speaking of Wrangel who commanded the Cossacks and who had, he considered, long intrigued against him and was now letting him down at the critical moment. Denekin was devoted to Holman as he had been to his predecessor, Briggs, and was enthusiastic over Winston Churchill, who had wholeheartedly supported him. He thought little of me, a pessimist, proposing to withdraw all help and putting such degrading proposals and alternatives before him.

That afternoon we staged a march through the town of all available British troops. What with the Royal Scots, the Mission and the sailors, we produced over a thousand men with band and pipes. They made a brave show and had no doubt a calming effect on the nervous townsfolk. Denekin took the salute and was delighted with the pipes which he had never heard before. Several Russian regiments followed, fine young veterans, all officers, wearing British khaki. Thousands of bloodthirsty looking Don Cossacks on their shaggy ponies were also marching in, armed to the teeth. The streets were alive with soldiery, every café full to bursting and crowds thronged the quays trying to board the ships. But still no one would hold the green hills round the town, and the Bolshevik advanced guard, a motley ragged crew of Jew-driven sailors, Letts and Chinese picked, it was said, for their delight in torture and murder came hourly nearer.

For some time the volunteers had been plotting against Denekin and Romanovski, his Chief of Staff, and I invited

the General to bring his train into our zariba. He refused, saying that he was quite safe amongst his own troops. However, the same night he asked for asylum and came under our protection. At the same time General Makeroff informed me confidentially that the Volunteer army proposed to arrest Denekin and murder Romanovski before they took ship. We therefore stopped the Volunteer Headquarters train with General Kutepoff¹ from coming into our enclave in spite of his peremptory demands. It was indeed only the guns ready for action protecting the entrance that decided him to return to the west of the harbour. Holman tried to get Romanovski away on a destroyer. But he flatly refused to leave his chief, saying that if Denekin should insist he would enlist as a private in the Korniloff Regiment, which had sworn to kill him. He was a brave man, but seems to have been regarded as the evil genius of the campaign and no doubt Denekin's mistaken loyalty to his friend had been one of the causes of his own downfall.

Romanovski was duly murdered a fortnight later, under our noses in the Russian Embassy at Constantinople. The murderer, in a Russian officer's uniform, escaped. I was there a few minutes later and was told that the little Korniloff boy of twelve years old adopted by Denekin, was in the room with his sister at the time and had drawn a pistol and stood with his back to Denekin's door ready to defend him. Denekin was hurried on board the *Marlborough*. The murderer was never found.

With the limited shipping at our disposal it was obviously going to be impossible to embark much material or stores and I had authority to destroy everything that had to be left behind. We managed to ship

¹ Afterwards kidnapped in Paris.

the guns and the sappers prepared the great ammunition dump for demolition. But with famine already stalking through the Kuban and the probability of relief work having to be undertaken (it was) I could not bring myself to destroy food, clothing and boots, and we left them as a present to the Bolsheviks. The ammunition dump had at the last moment to be left intact as hordes of Cossacks decided to bivouac round it and could not be got to move. Irritating as they had been we could hardly blow them sky-high.

The many wounded and sick officers in the local hospital presented another problem. It was reported that on the evacuation of Taganrog all the officers in the hospital had been brutally murdered and the Novorossia Reds were second to none in atrocities. Although we took as many as possible we had to leave behind the severely wounded and the typhus cases, which were not allowed on our ships. The Russians to whom typhus was an annual disorder, did not take the same serious view of the disease and brought many cases away. Finally I hit on the idea of internationalizing the hospital, and found three or four doctors, an American, a Frenchman, and, I think, a Swiss, who were willing to remain, and we ran up the flags of all nations on the building and put an imposing placard on the door. At the same time I sent out a broadcast that the hospital had been taken over and its security guaranteed by the League of Nations, then an infant institution of unknown powers. It was a relief to hear afterwards from Milne that it remained inviolate during that turbulent period.

The last few days were crowded with incident and everyone worked day and night to get away as many refugees as possible. One night a harassed embarkation

officer was approached on the quayside by a little man dressed as a Russian soldier, who, touching his cap in Newmarket style, said, "Beg pardon, sir, got any room for me 'orses?" "What horses?" asked the officer testily. The lad put his hand to his mouth and whispered hoarsely, "I got Minoru here and Aboyeur." If he had said he had the Tsar there one would not have been more surprised. Minoru won the Derby for King Edward VII in 1909 and Aboyeur won it in 1913. Both had afterwards been sold to a Russian stud. The Bolsheviks at that time had a mania for poleaxing all pedigree stock as part of the levelling programme and the resourceful stud-groom had driven the two horses down from near Moscow in a cart. Room was made on board ship for these exiled aristocrats, and they were sent to Serbia, where I hope they continued their honourable career. Richard Marsh in his *Memoirs* writes, "Minoru was sold to Russia for something like £30,000. Often I have wondered what had become of him when that unhappy country boiled up." Here is the answer.

Evacuation from our own quay, thanks to the Navy and the officers and men of the Mission, went smoothly and quickly, but on the Russian quays the turmoil and struggling was intense and let loose the baser passions of the refugees and soldiers. Nevertheless Russian ships evacuated seventy-five per cent of those brought away, and I registered the impression that one, Jematoff, Admiral and General, but performing the duties of Naval Transport Officer, was the only Russian I found at this time capable of doing a good job of work.

Bolshevist columns were already coming over the hills under fire of the guns of the *Empress of India*, *Calypso* and *Waldeck-Rousseau*, and fighting was going on in the town

before we took off our rear-guard of three platoons of the Royal Scots in the flotilla leader, *Stuart*, in which I also embarked. One of the destroyers ran in and took off some belated Russians firing with her machine-guns, derelict barges crammed to the water-line were taken in tow, and a few desperate swimmers picked up and we steamed away leaving, I fear, a good deal of wailing and lamentation. We transferred to the Admiral's ship, the *Empress of India*, which was loaded with Cossacks, some of whom at the last moment had made a rush for the ships instead of pursuing their way south along the coast as had been planned. Denekin came on board and thanked Admiral Seymour and myself for what we had done for him.

The transports steamed away for the Crimea and the Bosphorus and the fighting ships lay off Novorossisk that night. In the morning we could see bodies of Cossacks returning north along the coast, having been headed off by the Greens. The French ship *Jules Michelet* joined us and reported having rescued many Cossacks during the night with torpedo boats. They had been attacked by the Green Guards and had taken to the sea, some of them even swimming out on their horses under fire. The *Jules Michelet* had covered them with her guns. The remainder seem to have been surrounded and had either joined the Greens or were disarmed and disbanded. Holman urged the Admiral to send back ships from Theodosia to try and pick some more of them up. This was agreed to but I think abandoned as the Russian Navy would no longer obey Denekin's orders. About 10.30 a.m. fire was opened on us from the shore and the fleet made a hasty withdrawal.

So ended the Denekin Saga and one had reason to be proud of the British Navy and of the small force of British

troops involved. The War Office had no doubt been nervous as to the fate of its Mission to South Russia, and after the evacuation from Novorossisk I received a letter of thanks to all concerned, from which the following is an extract:

The Army Council consider that it was entirely due to the active part played by the British Naval and Military Forces present, that the situation did not develop into a terrible disaster which might have resulted in loss of life on a large scale. They are greatly impressed by the fact that the embarkation of such large numbers of Denekin's troops and of refugees on the 25th and 26th of March, was due to the staunch attitude of the Royal Scots Fusiliers assisted by the Military Mission, in holding the defensive line around the Mission buildings and in maintaining order on the Eastern Quay, and to the indefatigable work of certain members of the British Military Mission in organizing the necessary arrangements on the spot at the shortest notice.

To me on the spot the whole affair was a degrading spectacle of unnecessary panic and disorder, and I urged the Government by cable to dissociate themselves from the White Russians who had no prospects and little fight left in them.

Denekin resigned his command and the Russian generals under Dragomiroff at a council of war held at Sevastopol elected Baron Wrangel. In my report on this to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff I wrote, "It remains to be seen how long he can remain at the top of the ladder of intrigue by which he has climbed," and warned him to stand by for another evacuation of 30,000. We assisted the Russians to fortify and man the Perekop position in the Crimea, but on Wrangel's deciding to take

the offensive in conjunction with the Poles we definitely abandoned him. The French, interested in the Poles, continued to support the White Russians. The Poles, guided by Weygand and his forty staff officers, beat the Bolsheviks, but made a speedy peace, thus releasing large forces against Wrangel, who, fighting gallantly, was driven back into the Crimea where the usual evacuation took place in October 1920, this time to Gallipoli. This was the final act of the White Russian drama, an epic in great heroism, patriotism and self-sacrifice, marred by intrigue and inefficiency.

From time immemorial the classic penalty for mixing in a family quarrel has been a thick ear and our ill-staged interference in the Russian civil war cost us some thousands of British soldiers' lives and £100,000,000 in money, while we earned the bitter enmity of the Russian people for at least a decade. It had the effect of uniting the Russians against foreigners and gave their Government an excuse for repudiating their debts to us. Added to which I returned to Constantinople with mumps. On the credit side I can think of nothing.

CHAPTER XV

SMYRNA

Trust not for freedom to the Franks—
They have a king who buys and sells:
In native swords and native ranks
The only hope of courage dwells;
But Turkish force and Latin fraud
Would break your shield, however broad.
The Isles of Greece—Byron.

CHAPTER XV

THINGS in Constantinople were now going very badly. The Turks themselves were in two opposing factions of which the Sultan's party, though enjoying the official support of the Allies was growing visibly weaker.

I find myself writing to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff: "As to the situation here one can fairly say it gets worse with each passing month, and the possibility of enforcing a peace which would be satisfactory from our point of view becomes more remote. The preposterous delay in tackling the settlement has been all in favour of the Turk, who has manœuvred himself into a reasonably strong position and has contrived to sow dissension in the Allied camp. I hope you realize that we are within sight of a situation in which we shall find ourselves backing half the Turks and the French the other half. Whereas six months ago the Turk would eat out of our hand, he is now turning against us and engineering trouble for us in Egypt and India. This state of affairs is due to contributory causes:

"(1) Dilatoriness of the Peace Conference;

"(2) Smyrna;

"(3) French propaganda.

"Is it realized that, by reason of the sympathy of our Government towards Greek aspirations and the astuteness of our allies we have been forced into the position of chief, if not sole, champion of Greek interests against Islam and against the Slavs?"

I had twice been sent for to Paris to be questioned on Near Eastern affairs, but on each occasion either interest had evaporated or some other problem occupied the Great. This may have been due to the length of time it took to get to Paris. The second time I went by an American destroyer (with the captain's wife on board) to Naples and in Rome we had a fracas with Italian soldiers, who invaded the compartment reserved for us. A great crowd collected round the carriage and there were hard words said, fist-shaking and some pushing. Providentially the train moved out. I was surprised at the animosity displayed towards our uniforms, for even in ex-enemy countries one could count on a good reception. Arrived in Paris I found the Prime Minister had gone to Deauville, where I was bidden to spend the week-end with him.

I was, as always, amazed at the resilience of this extraordinary man. Having won the war he was now engaged in securing every advantage possible for the British Empire over the green table. Now on the topmost pinnacle of fame he held a position unique in history and strangely enough no one seemed to grudge him his power or his laurels. The popular attitude was summed up by Balfour when he said, "Let the little beggar get the credit, he deserves it." He seemed to thrive on tremendous responsibilities and hard work, and could at any time relax and play like a schoolboy with Celtic exuberance. He inhabited a rather "louche" rococo villa and the party included Lady Astor, Lord Riddell, Hamar Greenwood and Philip Kerr. On Sunday night we sang hymns, quite creditably to Miss Stephenson's accompaniment. My bass was duly appreciated. Note in my diary "business transacted, 'nil.'"

The landing of the Greeks in Smyrna in the summer of

1919 urged upon Lloyd George, Clemenceau and President Wilson by Venezelos, had a harmful reaction on our position in Turkey. It was carried out with the aid of the British Fleet and was accompanied by some massacre and looting. The disarmament of Turkey ceased automatically and a great impetus was given to the Nationalist Movement under Mustapha Kemal in Asia Minor. The Greeks in Constantinople adopted a provocative attitude and demonstrated against their ancient master the Turk. Services were held in Greek churches advocating the elimination of the Ottoman from Constantinople and there was danger of racial riots. The idea of house-to-house search for rifles had to be abandoned. Trouble was to be expected when the peace terms were published and I had advocated bringing all units, French and British, up to establishment, which would have given us another 10,000 men.

Writing to the War Office was generally like writing to Santa Claus, but on this occasion the Chief of the Imperial General Staff did reply that while Egypt, Arabia, Mesopotamia and India, all clamoured for an immediate peace with the Turk, Downing Street would continue to back the Greeks in their imperial designs. I protested that besides the known disadvantages to us they would spell ruin for Greece and pointed out that the Big Four were pinning their faith on one man, who though "jolly-good-chap, talks—excellent—English," was a much menaced person. There was in fact at the time an extensive plot to assassinate Venezelos and he was later shot in the shoulder at the Gare de Lyons. I went to see him in hospital in the Rue Georges Bizet. He told me that if he had not been an old Cretan "comitadjî" and jumped down on the railway line and run about crouching like a rabbit,

he would certainly have been killed. Nor was this the only attempt on his life. Curiously enough he lay in the same bed that had held Clemenceau after a similar experience. The Mother Superior said, "*Je spécialise dans les premiers assassinés.*" The doctor told me a typical Clemenceau story. During the crisis of his illness he sent for the Mother Superior and said, "You have all been very kind to me here, what can I do for you in return?" The Mother Superior said that the nuns had been deeply concerned for his spiritual welfare and would like him to confess. He did not welcome the idea, but promised to sleep on it. The next morning, feeling better, he sent for her and said: "Strangely enough after our conversation of yesterday I dreamt that I had died and been transported to the Gates of Heaven, where I was met by St. Peter who denied me admittance saying: 'We know all about you, you are Clemenceau—you must go back and confess.'" Moved with thankfulness the Mother Superior exclaimed, "And then?" "I said, 'I am a very old man and very tired, and I cannot go back all that long way. Bring me out a priest and I will confess here.' St. Peter agreed and disappeared. After many hours he returned and said, 'I am very sorry, M. Clemenceau, there isn't one.'"

Venezelos was a Liberal of Western ideas and his ambition was to free and unite all the Greek Colonies. He had designs on the Black Sea littoral where he maintained that the best and purest Greeks lived. I was sent to Samsun to investigate but not unnaturally met no one but Greeks waving flags. All Thrace up to Tatchalja was now to be Greek as well as Smyrna and as much of the hinterland as possible. I do not know whether Venezelos also coveted Constantinople, but certainly his political oppon-

ents looked to the East and expected King Constantine to return and lead them to Byzantium and St. Sophia under the wing of some Great Power, preferably Great Britain.

But no one yet knew what was to be the fate of the Turkish capital. Russia, to whom in a weak moment its disposal had been promised, had collapsed and was now out of the running. Internationalization had been proposed but abandoned. America could no doubt have had a mandate for Turkey in Europe, and I could think of no better solution than to have handed Constantinople over to the American Army to re-organize and rebuild. For whatever the American Army undertakes it carries out after West Point traditions, and a threefold city in the superb setting of the Bosphorus organized after the manner of the Panama Canal Zone would have been one of the wonders of the world.

It must be remembered that the Turk at that time gave no promise of any constructive ability and Stamboul was still but a captured city crumbling under the occupation of a nomad race of conquerors who might at any time move on (or back). The very way a Turk rolled up his bed in the morning, savoured of loading the camels for the next day's march. Regarded without prejudice the Turks were Asiatics and their place was in Asia. They had come into the war on the wrong side and given us a deal of trouble and had treated the rank and file of British prisoners of war with such medieval neglect and brutality that few of them survived captivity. This one could never forgive. Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of State for India attacked me in 1919 for holding and airing these views and said that the ejection of the Turk from Constantinople would mean eternal war in the Mohammedan world. I could not agree. The Caliphate meant

little to India and the Mohammedan is above all a fighting man and knows that having been beaten you must take your medicine; any other procedure to him spells weakness in the conqueror. Montagu was nervous because we had just started a new war with Afghanistan. But the long-drawn-out armistice and the war-weariness of the Allies worked in favour of the Turks and thanks to the resolution of one man they kept the prize. But mindful, no doubt, of Abdul Hamid's dictum, "battleships can't climb hills," Mustapha Kemal established his capital in Asia Minor out of gun range of the sea.

But other clauses of the Treaty of Sèvres, which, as Poincaré said, was "more fragile than a piece of her porcelain," were most unpalatable to the Turks, and the Ghazi, not unnaturally, refused to accept them and defied the Sultan and the Allies. Recruits flocked to his standard and his attitude became threatening. With no more troops of their own available, the Allied councillors were in a quandary, but the ingratiating and ever-ready Venizelos was at hand always ready with a few divisions. He had offered help before in Macedonia, Russia, Bulgaria and wherever used it must be admitted that the Greeks had fought with credit. Now with a well-organized and equipped army in Smyrna he saw his opportunity. His proffered assistance was readily accepted—*timeo Danaos*.

In view of the discreditable happenings at Smyrna in 1919 it was decided to keep the Greeks under British control, and I received orders to proceed to Smyrna with a sufficiency of officers to supervise the operations. I wound up the Constantinople Mission and took leave of my bijou palace. The Admiralty who had long tired of sending me about in destroyers had now allotted me a "yacht" called the *Rosemary*, in reality a fleet minesweeper,

flying the blue ensign with a Cunard crew, comfortable enough, but with her shallow draft extremely lively in a sea way. We arrived at Smyrna at the end of May 1920 and settled the Mission in a big house on the quay belonging to an Armenian. My staff consisted chiefly of officers already on the spot who had been prisoners with the Turks and could talk Turkish and some of them Greek. My G.S.O. 2, Stephens, also spoke excellent Italian and we all of course spoke French. Without these linguistic attainments the success of the Mission would have been doubtful.

The Greeks occupied a zone round Smyrna and had now an army of 90,000 men in six divisions and a cavalry brigade, while the Turks had only some 30,000 men ready to oppose them with an immediate reserve of about 8,000. General Paraskevopoulos, the Greek Commander, had led the 1st Greek Corps in Macedonia, but had so far had little opportunity for distinction. He was born a Smyrniote and when he entered the Army as a cadet it was prophesied by a priest that one day as Commander-in-Chief, he would enter his natal city and that the crowning reward of his career would be the Governorship of Constantinople. At the time of which I write he had high hopes of the complete fulfilment of the prediction. The staff was good and there were three or four officers who would have held their own in any army, notably the firebrand, Pangalos, an Albanian born, trained at the *Ecole de Guerre* in Paris and with the experience of three Balkan wars. Also Kondylis, ranker, *comitadj*i and desperate fighter, who commanded a regiment. Both had been amongst the first to join Venezelos' revolutionary movement and each afterwards executed *coups d'état* and became Dictators of Greece. Kondylis ousted Pangalos and

showed a statesman-like spirit, playing a prominent part in the government of the country up to the Restoration of 1935.

The Greek Army was still under the orders of General Milne, the General Officer Commanding the Black Sea Army at Constantinople, who commanded all troops in Asia Minor, and for some time the Greek Commander had been clamouring for permission to attack to clear his front of threatening forces, but had been held in check. Plans were elaborated both for the occupation of Eastern Thrace and the capture of the Smyrna-Panderma railway.

On 19th June, M. Venezelos telegraphed from Paris asking whether the Army was prepared to undertake the latter operation and to carry it out in fifteen days. The Commander-in-Chief gave a ready acquiescence and was desired by the Supreme Council to set his army in motion. From now on he was to be "Archistrategos," acting independently of General Milne. Operations began late in June and were carried through against a rather dispirited enemy with such vigour that all the desired objectives were secured within ten and a half days. This was mainly due to the enthusiasm and fitness of the Greeks, who, in their sandals, made prodigious marches and left scarcely a man behind. Divisions had no wheeled transport and the mules came in handy for carrying stragglers to the tune of two apiece.

I had my headquarters in a train with general headquarters and followed the operations with the aid of a Ford car. As far as possible we had officers with every advancing division to ensure that the strict orders as to correct conduct towards the inhabitants should be carried out. A serious collision took place between Greek and Italian troops with casualties on both sides, but the matter

was finally adjusted without an open breach of relations. The Greeks were allowed to remain in occupation of the disputed ground, the hills overlooking the plain of Ephesus.

Once in possession of Panderma, a picturesque little port, the Greek Commander advocated the seizure of Brusa, a considerable city, ancient capital and holy place, with a view to clearing the front. Realizing, however, that such an operation would entail important political consequences he was averse from assuming sole responsibility first and sought the moral support of the British Command at Constantinople. This was readily given and the operation was aided by the British Navy who landed bluejackets and marines and seized Mudania and Gemlik, covered by the fire of their guns. The French Consul's house at the former place was blown sky-high.

I watched the attack on Brusa by the Archipelago Division. The artillery under command of Sophocles Venezelos, son of the great Eleutherios, was very effective. The defence was inadequate and the Greeks, outflanking the Turkish trenches, advanced with great energy and determination, and in a few hours occupied the city. Careful arrangements were made to see that there was no looting or undue molestation of the inhabitants and the Greeks behaved well. We moved into the little hotel where our senior officer prisoners of war had lived in Turkish captivity. I found in the visitors' book the signature of my old friend, Sir Charles Melliss, V.C., taken at Kut, an unwilling visitor for two years. The capture of Brusa was not on our programme and I believe Venezelos, not having been consulted took it amiss and repudiated it to the Supreme Council.

We now occupied the area extending westward to the

Dardanelles and prepared for a descent on Thrace. I crossed the Marmora in a British battleship and under our guns the Greeks landed practically unopposed on the north shore. After six days' desultory fighting, the Nationalists scattered and the fall of Adrianople set upon the short campaign the seal of complete success and forced the Turks to sign the Treaty of Sèvres, by which Greece was to get Eastern Thrace and a large share of Anatolia. There could be no permanency in such a settlement, but whereas we on the spot wanted a friendly Turk, Lloyd George was uninterested in the East and fell to the seductions of Venezelos.

Both areas of operation were speedily cleared of the enemy, but at the end of July a Greek column in Anatolia pursuing a Nationalist band, was attacked at Demirji and suffered heavy losses. Demirji was thereupon occupied, and one thing leading to another, to avenge the defeat and ensure supplies a further advance was made to Ushak, Gedis and Seiav. There was little opposition and Gedis, the last place to fall, was occupied on 4th September. The obvious goal of the Greek Army was the line of the Baghdad Railway, and there is little doubt that if left to himself the Archistrategos would soon have found a pretext for further exploiting his successes. But he now came into conflict with the plans of M. Venezelos, who viewed further encroachments with disfavour and forbade the advance. Probably he was influenced in this by the lack of unanimity amongst the Allies, but he also attached value to the concurrence of his able High Commissioner, M. Sterghiades, in his own opinion that the victorious and independent attitude of the Greek High Command constituted a political danger and must be sternly repressed. In a country of continual political

strife such as Greece, he was no doubt quite right. Another victory and Paraskevopoulos or Pangalos, his Chief of the Staff (to be heard of later) would have been eligible for a dictatorship. To remove causes of friction between the Military and the High Commission at Smyrna Venezelos now transferred General Paraskevopoulos and his principal staff officers to Athens. The Army had deserved well of the country and the Allies, and compared to that of 1918 its efficiency was of a high order.

Writing at the time, I note: "There is a sufficiency of good commanders and staff officers, and some few would be conspicuous in any army. As regards powers of marching and resistance to hardships the troops are better than any army the West can produce and though their steadiness in adversity is problematical, their élan in attack is magnificent."

Politics, however, were the bane of the Army and divisions were still labelled as Royalist or Venezelist, and as every Greek is a born politician and loves talking, it is difficult to see how this source of weakness is ever to be eradicated.

The whole of our time at Smyrna was not taken up with minding the Greek Army and there were welcome intervals when tired of war alarms one could enjoy the relaxations of what at that time was still a delectable city with no lack of agreeable inhabitants, though the smouldering beauties discovered by Kinglake remained closely hidden. Most of our friends belonged to the old Levantine families, English, French and Greek, who lived *en prince* in the beautiful suburbs of Boujah and Bournabat in fine houses with very lovely gardens. One of them I remember naming "The House of the Fruitful Vine" for its procreative atmosphere. There was a large family of charming people

and always a new baby, new puppies, kittens or perhaps the ancient parrot would lay an egg. One of our officers married into the family later and I hope carried on the tradition.

It was very hot that summer and for a time I lived in "Byron's villa" in an olive grove, approached by an avenue of magnificent cypresses. Here, local legend said, he wrote part of *Childe Harold*, and he certainly carved his name on a tree trunk. The romance of Lord Byron still lives on in Greece and you may still see the face of a humble peasant, an Evzone or an island fisherman brighten at the sound of his name. I believe that the country's traditional friendship for England which persists in face of many set-backs, is based on the sacrifice he made for Hellas more than a century ago.

Later we made a camp on the mountain-side behind Smyrna in a divine spot amongst fig-trees and vineyards beside an age-old stone fountain. There was a superb view over the Sea of Marmora and the sunsets were memorable. We kept a small Greek guard to shoo away the brigands and I had always my faithful Evzone kavass, one of the handsomest men I have ever seen, a Greek god in a white kilt who was allotted to me as bodyguard. He was also quite stupid and incapable of carrying the simplest message, but as his only job was to get killed first there was no doubt that he would do it satisfactorily. My little yacht was brought round from Constantinople and with a Greek who drank salt water and a tough Levantine girl, who liked being capsized, for crew we had some enjoyable sailing and fishing in the Gulf. Fish abounded, especially a fine red bream of about ten pounds, which was very good eating. We were frequently caught in sudden storms.

The campaign had gone off well, but I had an uneasy

feeling already expressed and strengthened by contact with M. Sterghiades and the Generals that Venezelos was none too secure and that if he crashed the edifice would go with him. He had now arrived at Athens in a blaze of glory, and I went across and had a talk with him and with the King and Lord Granville, our Minister. The King had recently morganatically married the charming Made-moiselle Mânos whom we had known at Constantinople. Venezelos was very optimistic about the situation and confident of the continued support of the Great Powers, but the result of my conversation with him was that I cabled home announcing the complete success of the operations and suggesting that my mission should be recalled as I could see no further use for it. In fact I said, "Let us get out while the going is good."

Returning to Smyrna we had the sudden rough weather that one gets in the Mediterranean, and an enormous sea, in fact, a kind of tidal wave that the little Greek torpedo-boat which carried us negotiated with difficulty. We were hours late and arrived to find there had been an earthquake in Smyrna. Some wooden houses had collapsed and there were a few deaths and a big fire. Most of our crockery was broken and there was a crack in my bedroom wall that I could put my hand in.

The result of my representation was that I was allowed to wind up the Mission and come home. We were all invited over to Athens for a grand victory fête and received verbal bouquets from the King and Venezelos. It was a picturesque ceremony. Hundreds of bishops and priests in their magnificent old robes and mitres marched into the crowded stadium in front of the colours of all regiments, bands and so forth. The Evzones of the Guard in their white kilts stood round the top wall against a cobalt sky.

I sat with King Alexander, Venezelos and a French and Italian General, and of course a Naval representative, for our fleet had given Greece a good backing. We had a banquet in the evening and next day an old Greek play in the Acropolis theatre with the blue sea and Salamis as a drop scene and the players declaiming on the old marble stage. Afterwards Isidora Duncan's girls danced classic dances—a beautiful effect.

All seemed well with the Greeks and they appeared to be the only people satisfied with the peace terms. Smyrna, a large slice of Anatolia, Eastern Thrace and possibilities. But Fate, disguised as a pet monkey, was waiting on them. King Alexander received a bite from which he got blood poisoning and died. In November, the Greeks, running true to form since the days of Pericles, turned on Venezelos to whom they owed everything, and threw him out. The country was torn by political convulsions from which the Army was by no means immune. Politics in the Army or Navy is the seed of disintegration of a country and let those who doubt look to the lessons of the aftermath of the war. It was now inevitable that King Constantine, to many Greeks the symbol of Byzantium, should come back, and his return was the signal for the Powers to attempt mediation. On Greece refusing this the Great Powers declared their neutral attitude and left the Turks and Greeks to fight it out.

The Greeks now had 300,000 men and guns, munitions and stores galore, supplied, it was said, by the mystery gun-man, Basil Zaharoff. I taxed him with this years afterwards at Monte Carlo, but he was as close as an oyster, only remarking that he was a patriot and a monarchist and Greece *as a monarchy* could always rely on his support. King Tino inherited a none too good military

situation in Anatolia and made the mistake of under-rating the enemy and advancing still further into a hostile country—on the road to Angora. The Turks fought desperately to save their capital and after a three-weeks' battle on the Sakharia River, the Greeks were driven back to their original positions. Here they remained for a year whilst Mustapha Kemal now the Ghazi, or Christian-killer, scraped up an army. By this time it was clear to the disheartened and divided Greeks that the Allies would not allow them to keep the conquered territory, and when attacked in August 1922 they made a poor resistance, and were driven back on Smyrna and into their ships. The retreat of 190 miles became a rout and culminated in the customary scenes of pillage, arson and massacre on the quays of Smyrna under the eyes of the Allied fleets.

Soon the Turks were confronting the British, sole remaining guardians of Allied prestige at Chanak and the Ghazi succeeded in bluffing the General on the spot and the Government behind him into complying with his demands, the immediate restitution of Thrace and Constantinople. So ended a long chapter of procrastination and expedients which reflected little credit on the British Government. Mustapha Kemal on the other hand had saved his country by his resolution and audacity and put her back on the map.

One could not but have some sympathy for the unfortunate Greek peasants of Thrace and Anatolia who had been persecuted since the beginning of the war, had fled and joined the army and fought in Macedonia, Russia, Anatolia and Thrace. The political changes in their country were no business of theirs and under the Treaty of Sèvres, they had joyfully expected to be able to return to their homes. But now their choice was to remain as

outlaws to be hunted down and murdered by the Moham-medans or to fly the country as refugees. I received a petition on their behalf from General Paraskevopoulos, himself now discarded, signed by most of the Greek Generals, but could get no hearing for it. The Greeks had ceased to be news, they had been dropped and must "dree their weird."

However, the Turks eventually expelled all Greeks from their country and the absorption of a million refugees by a people of only four and a half million, who were still reeling from an unsuccessful war, was not the least of Greek achievements and could not fail to contribute to the future prosperity of this thrifty and diligent people.

CHAPTER XVI

ABOUT ROBERT BRIDGES

Open for me the gates of delight,
The gates of the garden of man's desire ;
Where spirits touch'd by heavenly fire
Have planted the trees of life.

—*Ode to Music.*

CHAPTER XVI

MY work in the Near East over, I came home to be demobilized after six years of war or near-war, and was given some leave.

On my return to England I managed to see a good deal of my Uncle Robert, now the last, as he was (with the exception of a brother who died early) the youngest, of the senior generation. When his brother George in the Navy went to slosh the Russians in the Baltic during Crimean days, and brother John to garrison Malta as "a private in the Buffs,"¹ and my father was serving John Company in India, Robert was still a boy at Eton. As according to his wishes his biography was never written these personal notes may interest the many friends and admirers of a long life.

At Oxford he took a second in Greats and was a noted oar and stroke for his college, Corpus Christi. Since his death, Dr. Bourne has revealed to us that he was invited to stroke the university boat, but declined on the plea of Schools. After leaving Oxford and an interval of travel, he entered St. Bartholomew's as a medical student, and became Casualty Physician there in 1877: he also worked at the Children's Hospital in Great Ormond Street, and the Great Northern. He had never meant to pursue this profession after the age of forty and in 1881 after acute pneumonia and a long convalescence in Italy, he retired and devoted himself to literature.

¹ He was in the Grenadier Company of the Militia battalion and his comrades were the navvies who had just finished their job on the Great Exhibition.

He settled at Yattendon where he leased the Manor House, and (in 1884) married Monica, the daughter of his friend and neighbour Alfred Waterhouse, R.A., who made for him the perfect wife and gave him a son and two daughters. His son Edward, also of studious bent, was caught up in the war and went to France in a Territorial battalion of the Oxford and Bucks. Light Infantry. He won the Military Cross, became adjutant and was wounded, returning quietly to his work like so many admirable civilian soldiers, as soon as the job was finished. He is now a pillar of the Treasury.

Here at Yattendon the Poet passed the first twenty years of his married life and here many of his best works were written. At the same time he devoted much attention to church music, hymns and chants, and trained the village choir to sing Elizabethan music. With the assistance of his friend Wooldridge he compiled the Yattendon Hymnal which contains his translations of many old hymns from the Latin and German and which rescued many good tunes from oblivion.

After a period of moving about, to Switzerland and elsewhere, entailed by his wife's health, he finally built a house for himself at Boars Hill, three miles from Oxford and overlooking the city.

Delayed perhaps by the pursuit of science his muse bloomed late and we find him beginning to publish verse in the early thirties at an age that Keats, Shelley and Rupert Brooke scarcely reached. The leisurely publication of the *Shorter Poems*, eight classical plays and the sonnet series entitled *The Growth of Love*, soon made his reputation, but always he remained a difficult, fastidious, austere and reticent poet who could never descend to cheapen his art

and who had a disregard and even a contempt for the limelight of publicity.

Under these circumstances it is rather remarkable that in 1913, Mr. Asquith should have selected him for the Laureateship. Nor did he, I believe, accept the position too willingly.

Unknown to the general public, he was not a popular candidate. For some seven years scarcely a poem saw the light under his own name, though his war poems found their anonymous way into *The Times*, and during those troublous years he made speeches and gave lectures to working men. The lesser educated giped at the Dumb Laureate and cried out for Kipling. Questions as to his output were even put in Parliament but the Prime Minister had ample answers ready.

One cannot deny that except for the *Shorter Poems* which soon established themselves, his work was often above the ordinary person. He abhorred jingle and could not write:

Down the electric wire the message came,
He is not better he is just the same.

He delighted in word painting and metrical experiments and with all their lovely flow his poems are difficult to memorize for the substitution of a single word will change the picture and the rhythm. When in Australia, in order to try and improve our memories, we made it a rule to learn a fresh stanza of poetry and say it every day before breakfast, no verse—no breakfast. This was very successful, and my daughter and I absorbed a good deal of poetry. Incidentally it sometimes led to a forgetful aide-de-camp missing his breakfast. But Uncle Robert we found hard

to manage, and with the exception of "A Passer-by" I do not think he found his way into our repertoire.

It is typical of his shyness and modesty that he published two anthologies, one the *Spirit of Man* as a solace for the soul, and the other *The Chilswell Book of Poetry*, intended for use in schools, and in neither of them is one of his own works to be found. This compares favourably with the distinguished American Man of Letters, who compiled an immense anthology of the world's best poetry, but could not restrain himself from including forty pages of his own.

He continued to lead a secluded life at Chilswell and to produce solid and subtle work. Although few knew him well or even his works, up to the time of his death, besides poetry he may be credited with an abundance of masterly prose essays and memoirs as well as tracts for the Society of Pure English, which he helped to found and whose aims he had very much at heart.

In 1924, he and Monica visited the United States and were for three months guests of the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. This visit, though long and dubiously debated, was thoroughly enjoyed. His reluctance to receive journalists was summarized by the Press: "King's Canary refuses to chirp." On his eightieth birthday, an influential group of friends presented him with a clavichord made for the occasion by Mr. Arnold Dolmetsch.

Robert Bridges was a fine figure of a man. Over six foot, like all the men of his breed, he was lean, muscular and supple, with a leonine head and a shock of grey hair. He had strong hands which had a surprisingly delicate touch on the harpsichord. The frequent walks to Oxford and back were nothing to him and at the age of seventy he drilled with the Oxford Volunteers and would have

given a good account of himself had he been called on.

In disposition he was gay and companionable, but fierce in argument. He loved real friends, good talk and good wine, and hated the spurious. "Boy, do you want to poison me?" he demanded of an undergraduate who was entertaining him at Oxford, and offered him wine. But he relented when his host produced Château Yquem of a generous year.

He worshipped beauty:

I love all beauteous things
I seek and adore them.

was his creed.

He had a charming old-world courtesy and would always walk to the end of his drive and open the gate to take leave of his visitors.

I corresponded with him frequently as he liked getting letters and wrote wittily and to the point. A peevish letter written after the Armistice, when it became evident that we were not to occupy Germany, and that I should not be able to ride my white horse down the Sieges Allee, inspired him to an ode¹ which though not perhaps in his best style, is topical:

One of all our brave commanders,
Near of kin and dear my friend,
Led his men in France and Flanders
From the first brush to the end:

Peril lov'd he, and undaunted
Sought it out, and thanked his stars
That to him a place was granted
In the worst of all the wars.

¹ To His Excellency, from *New Verse* (Clarendon Press), 1921.

He brought Uhlans in from Soignies,
Where the first blood was let out—
With his remnant from Andregnies
Saved St. Quentin's desperate rout.

Stiffly fought he through the onset
Undishearten'd by defeat;
Held the rear from dawn to sunset
Through the long days of retreat.

Times were, to retake the trenches
He dismounted his dragoons,
Suck'd his share of gas and stench
With lieutenants of platoons.

Hit by howitzers and snipers
He in his five years' campaign
Rode the land from Rheims to Wipers,
On the Marne and on the Aisne.

Many deeds would be to blazon,
Many fights, to tell them all;
Nieuport, Witchet, Contalmaison,
La Boisselle and Passendaal.

Nothing in his clean vocation
Vex'd his soul or came amiss,
From the hurried embarkation
To the fateful armistice:

But when terms of truce were bruited,
Then his cheery countenance fell
In confession undisputed
That things were not going well:

"Nay," he said, "my hope was larger;
'Twas not thus I look'd to win:
I had vow'd to rein my charger
In the streets of proud Berlin."

When we were at Biarritz once, Uncle Robert wrote and asked me to go and see the French poet, Francis Jammes, for whose work he had a strong appreciation and to whom he had even dedicated a poem¹ in which he says:

You are here in spirit, dear poet, and bring a motley group,
Your friends, afore you sat stitching your heavenly
trousseau—
The courteous old road-mender, the queer Jean Jacques
Rousseau,
Columbus, Confucius, all to my English garden they troop,
Under his goatskin umbrella the provident Robinson
Crusoe,
And the ancestor dead long ago in Domingo or Guadaloupe.

I dutifully acquiesced and read some of the poet's books and found his work refreshingly different from the morbid and introspective French poets then in vogue. Here was a joyous soul who lived with nature and sang her beauties; a St. Francis in his companionship of birds and animals. His affinity for my uncle was easy to detect. In their different environments the details of country life made a strong appeal to each and they had a common sincerity, simplicity and religious belief.

Francis Jammes was a dark, bearded man with green eyes and the Creole blood of Guadaloupe in his veins. He lived the life of a small squire in a *ferme-manoir* at Hasparren which had long been in the family.

¹ *New Verse* (Clarendon Press), 1921.

He entertained me to *dîner à la Basque*, the midday meal, with his mother, wife and seven children in the kitchen and the cat on the table. We had an excellent chicken stew Henry IV, with paprika and rice, Roquefort cheese and the white wine of Orthez. Jammes wore brown corduroy and leggings, being, in spite of his friendship for the birds much addicted to *la chasse* and thought he had had a grand day on the plains of Dax and Pau if he had walked twenty miles and shot three brace of quail. Though loving travel he was almost a recluse, having rarely been to Paris and never to London. He asked me to urge Robert Bridges to pay him a visit as he himself was too poor to travel. But in his dreams and his writings he wanders romantically far and wide and speaks freely of "*l'île ombreuse et verte aux noix de coco fraîches.*"

He had a pleasant deep voice and read poetry to us in the afternoon, preferring the verse of others to his own. He chose Alfred de Musset for his music.

As his later works demonstrate, he was an ardent *croyant* Roman Catholic, but this was not always so and he dated his conversion and that of Madame Jammes to the day when they took their apparently dying *avant-dernière* and dipped her in the well at Lourdes, achieving a miraculous cure. Certainly one could not wish to see a healthier child. After this Jammes became fervidly religious and a kind of unofficial confessor to the countryside, especially to the girls, of whom he was very fond.

In fact while I was talking to him after *dîner* as he smoked his big pipe "round and black as the breast of a little negress," I saw a young visitor arriving and prepared to take my leave, but M. Jammes bade me stay a little and see an interesting case. She was a young girl of an aristocratic Spanish family who had come to Orthez to retire from the

world and decide her future with the help of the poet. Her choice lay between marriage and the veil and she had with her a picture of her Saviour and a portrait of her fiancé, both of which she set up on the table before proceeding to business. At this point I tactfully said good-bye to M. Jammes and after being heartily kissed (by the poet) withdrew, carrying with me many graceful messages for my uncle as well as a colourful old-world picture for myself and laden with autographed books.

On his eighty-fifth birthday, without beat of drum, Uncle Robert published a long philosophic poem, "The Testament of Beauty," and awoke to find himself famous. It is a matter of 4,400 lines (twice the length of "Paradise Regained") composed in loose Alexandrines, a metre which gave him the maximum latitude for expression. Written, as it were, from the hill-top of his eight decades, the poem contains his final comments on life, of which he remained to the end an intense and almost sardonic observer. He had debated this work "coy in my home" for nearly thirty years and it is a modern response to scientific progress and shows the conviction of an essentially religious and informed mind that the divine is to be traced in the beauty all around us. He sent me each "book" in its original form and I have one before me now. A lover of good printing and craftsmanship, this edition must have given him some satisfaction, for it is beautifully printed in Fell type on hand-made paper in quarto by the Clarendon Press and corrected in Monica's exquisite Oxford script. It is the big work of his life. Appreciated to-day by the enlightened, it is safe in the hands of posterity.

When King George V conferred the Order of Merit on my uncle, he did not feel up to going to London to be

decorated, imagining, I think, that he would have to stand some time in a queue, which of course, was not the case. So Sir Harry Stonor was instructed to take the decoration to Chilswell and perform the ceremony, and he asked me to accompany him. Before receiving the decoration my uncle said a few graceful words to the effect that although his career showed little deserving of such an honour, if His Majesty would read his last work just published, he might then think that he had in some small measure merited his recognition.

A great scholar and a great Englishman, Robert Bridges joined the Immortals on 21st April, 1930. According to his wish his ashes were buried at Yattendon, under the churchyard cross which he had erected over his mother's grave.

CHAPTER XVII

TO AUSTRALIA

Regions Cæsar never knew
Thy posterity shall sway,
Where his eagles never flew,
None invincible as they.
Boadicea—Cowper.

CHAPTER XVII

AFTER the war the Army was glutted with Generals warranted sound in wind and limb and though well placed for rank and age my service prospects were not bright. The non-acceptance of the offer of a command in India forced upon me by the imminence of an operation on my leg led to a hint that I was blocking promotion and would probably have to be combed out by the doctors.

Finally, in 1922, I was offered the Governorship of South Australia, which would entail definite retirement. To leave the Army in which I had been born and bred was rather like another amputation. Still, the war was over, and the land might have rest for forty years. Moreover I had a strong desire to see those distant Antipodean Dominions, whence had come such splendid contingents of citizen soldiers to help the Mother Country through two wars. Ever since my Light-Horse days, I had had a soft place for the Diggers, so after some discussion and heart-burning, the die was cast.

Farewell the plumed troop, and the big wars.

My helmet became a hive for bees and I set out with my wife and daughter for South Australia where we were to spend the next five years.

Before sailing I went to Paris and took leave of Marshal Foch. I found him depressed and disillusioned over what he considered the failure of Versailles to provide for the security of France on the Rhine. He had a great admira-

tion for the Australian troops and wrote me a letter of appreciation of their services, which reposes in the War Museum at Melbourne. "Tell those doughty warriors of Australia," he said, "that their memory will be ever green in France." I also said good-bye to Marshal d'Esperey. He invited me to luncheon at the Golf Club at St.-Cloud of which he had just been made President. A queer appointment, I thought, as he was quite innocent of all forms of sport or games. It was his first visit to the club and he and his staff wore uniform. We walked round the course afterwards. The game was beyond him, but he was appalled by the lack of discipline among the caddies whom he said would have to be put into uniform and properly drilled.

Probably the most trying moment of a Governor's tenure of office is the day of arrival with its wealth of ceremonies and speech-making, especially if he is unaccustomed to the latter. Once over that fence, however, we soon settled down and found ourselves amongst a warm-hearted and hospitable people, whose chief desire seemed to be to make us feel at home.

Adelaide, our home town, lies between the hills and the sea. It is a beautiful and delectable city sited and designed with inspiration that its houses and lovely gardens may spread towards the hills and the south coast, its factories towards the port and always leave a belt of green parkland round the city proper. Its growth reflects the astonishing development of the state, due to the energy and enterprise of the early pioneers for all this has been built up in the lifetime of a single man. I have indeed had described to me by an eye-witness, an old lady who attained a century, for I called and congratulated her on her hundredth birthday, the first landing of Captain

and Governor Hindmarsh at Glenelg from H.M.S. *Buffalo*. This was in 1836, the opening of the Victorian Era.

South Australia is par excellence a pastoral and agricultural state, drawing its wealth chiefly from wool and wheat with wine and fruit-growing playing their part. The merino sheep is the backbone of her prosperity. The population is ninety per cent pure British stock, this includes Scotch, Irish and Welsh, and of the remainder most are Germans who left their country for liberty of conscience and who have made very good colonists. Whatever the future of migration, here is a solid foundation to start from.

The amenities were much the same as in England and we led the same kind of life. A really good boarding-school by the sea for my daughter, Alville, and every form of diversion for ourselves. A ride before breakfast and perhaps golf on excellent courses or tennis at Government House in the afternoon and a game of bridge at the Club before dinner. There was no lack of charming people and we made many friends.

For the summer, we had a nice residence called Marble Hill in the Mount Lofty Ranges, but all being addicted to the sea, preferred taking a house somewhere on the coast where we could bathe, sail and fish. Sometimes we stayed on Kangaroo Island, where a friend of ours had built a house, and where we could lead the simple life. The fishing here was particularly good, and the harpooning of big sting rays from a dinghy grand sport. The absence of water on the island and a rather sea-sick crossing protected it from invasion by holiday makers. The climate of South Australia, winter and summer, was as near perfect as any I know, though the summer was

sometimes punctuated with a hot and violent dust-storm, the "Northerly Buster."

Probably our happiest times were spent visiting the remoter parts of the state and sharing the old-fashioned life of the Australian settler. Though the galloping, bush-ranging, gold-digging Australia of Adam Lindsay Gordon, "Banjo" Patterson and Rolfe Boldrewood has passed into legend one may here recapture the spirit of the pioneer days. Out early in the cool of the morning on well-trained station horses (alas! getting rare, for a boundary rider can do four times the work in a Ford car) mustering sheep or cattle in the Salt Bush or kangaroo hunting and coming back late and hungry to a big "chop or steak" breakfast. They were great meat-eaters—the mailman at Alice Springs was credited with a leg of mutton at a sitting—and drank tea by the bucket.

In the Back Blocks kangaroos seemed to spring out of the ground with every shower of rain and had to be sternly suppressed as they ate the feed intended for sheep and cattle. Strange survivals, whose method of propagation is still argued. But the Antipodes deal in enigma. The trees which shed their bark and not their leaves—"Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed your leaves"—the flightless birds that burrow, parrots which will kill sheep, the man-eating clam which lies in wait on the Great Barrier Reef and sometimes avenges all oyster-kind by catching and assimilating the unwary, scrub fowl which leave their eggs to be incubated in a heap of debris, culminating in Nature's prize paradox the Duckbilled Platypus. East of Wallace's Line indeed one may meet with many curious survivals. The little Koala or Teddy-bear, which lives "on the tree-top" and refuses to live anywhere else, Tasmania's Devil, a fierce badger-like

animal and her rare wolf a carnivorous marsupial with an almost reptilian tail. On the north coast of Australia one finds the original mermaid in the shape of the Dugong, a vegetarian sea-cow of repulsive appearance.

To the "bird-minded" like ourselves the Australian Continent was peculiarly interesting and full of small problems of the balance of power, the struggle between the aboriginal and the invader in which alas! in most cases the shy native birds, like man himself, have been defeated and driven from their immemorial haunts to the far north. Amongst them there is the lovely Lyre Bird, a past master of song and mimicry and the Satin Bower Bird that clears and decorates, often with fresh blossom, a stage where he may dance for his own gratification. Besides many other interesting species there is a wealth of brilliant parrots and cockatoos which are often destructive to gardens and have to be kept within bounds. Amongst the numerous wild fowl the black swan holds pride of place and there is a fine wedge-tailed eagle.

The Australians are democratic and outspoken and have no use for snobbery. On driving on to the race-course or arrival at some function which attracted the Diggers, I would be greeted with a wave of the hand and shouts of "'Ullo, Tom!" This to the King's representative might seem familiar, but I looked on it as a compliment and a gesture that they were pleased to see one. Being fond of boxing I went one night to a fight at Adelaide, where the chairman opened the proceedings with "Please not to throw bottles as the Governor is here." A gentleman behind me touched me on the shoulder, and in a hoarse voice whispered, "Guv'ner, see that big chap sitting across the ring?" "You mean him," I said, "with the cauliflower ears?" "Yes," said my friend. "He's the finest man in the

country. Was heavyweight champion of Australia, doesn't drink, smoke, swear, read nor write." There is a justifiable pride in the country and its achievements and the superior attitude sometimes adopted by the "Pommie" (the British emigrant) who can't forget that there are more lamp-posts in Surbiton than in Sydney, leads him to speedy disaster and often to a ticket home. I once placed an English soldier friend of mine in a job as a hair-dresser, and the only advice I gave him was to remember he was henceforth an Australian. He has done remarkably well.

Australians are great people for sport, and sport with them signifies "pastimes." For although there is some good rough shooting of duck and quail, when in season, the hunting of wild game has practically ceased. The fox, first imported for sentimental reasons, has become a pest and is destroyed in any possible way, and wire puts hunting out of the question. Racing, cricket and football, however, loom large on the calendar and draw enormous crowds. Racing indeed flourishes even more than in Great Britain and attendance is almost universal. Ladies have their own totalisators and there is no excuse not to have a bit on. The Australian women are great 'sports,' attending race-courses and cricket and football matches almost as much as the men. The big race-meetings attract people from all over the Continent and many will come 2,000 miles to see the Melbourne Cup (Australia's Derby). Such occasions too, collect the Governors and their families and other 'important people' from all States with mass effects of grey frock-coats and white toppers. Conferences are also held between the Governor-General and the Governors, though nothing, of course, may interfere with racing. The Easter Monday Steeplechases

at Onkaparinga, once a small country club meeting, are now a gigantic annual picnic in a most picturesque setting.

One saw many a Homeric contest at cricket. I recollect in 1925 a nerve-racking Test Match on the Adelaide Oval. It was the deciding match of the rubber, Australia having already won twice, and it lasted for a week. The Australians after an early collapse (3 for 22), made 489, to which Ryder contributed a beautiful 201 not out. The English side were unlucky in their bowling, Tate, Gilligan and Freeman all receiving injuries. The fielding especially of Hobbs at cover, Hendren in the country, and Chapman everywhere, was brilliant. Gilligan's men batted late on Saturday and resumed on Monday with two wickets down for 39 under good conditions. Hobbs and Sutcliffe had yet to come, and the former made 119, while Hendren succeeded Sutcliffe and held the fort, giving us a total of 365. Though Australia had only a few hours to bat on the fourth day she managed to achieve 211 for 3; 335 runs in hand and seven wickets to fall and the match seemed as good as over. But a match is never won till stumps are drawn, and on the fifth morning rain fell (for the first time in this series of Tests) and postponed play for an hour. Here was England's great opportunity, and it was a real treat to see the left-handers, Kilner and Woolley on a "sticky-dog" wicket, run through the side. The remaining six wickets were skittled out for 39 runs. Total 250, leaving England with 374 to make. England's second innings began well, and at the end of the fifth day the score was 133 for three wickets. The sixth day was most exciting, Whysall and Chapman rising to the occasion with a great and spectacular partnership, each to be dismissed by a magnificent catch. Confronting an attack that had lost its punch, with two wickets in hand and

only 27 runs to get, we now seemed in a winning position, but Fate again intervened, rain fell late in the afternoon and stumps were drawn till next day amidst groans of disappointment from the multitude. So on the *seventh* morning, Gilligan, Freeman and Strudwick again faced the music, but soon succumbed to the refreshed attack, Australia winning this breathless and most sporting match by 11 runs.

I sat out this agonizing performance with Harry Forster, then Governor-General, who being himself a famous cricketer¹ watched every ball, and I think played most of them, for he was quite done up each evening and an easy prey to me at billiards at which game he could normally give me a long start. He was indeed a great stylist at any game and for years one of the best helmsmen in the Solent.

It is amazing how open these Test Matches continue to be when one remembers the relative size of the populations. Since those days a Bradman has arrived to dominate the cricket situation, and one can never be sure that other prodigies are not waiting for us with their pads on. The Antipodes can always be relied upon to keep us on our toes in sport. Witness the New Zealand All-Black Rugby team and Australia's great tennis players. And this year the Ashtons of Goulburn have brought their ponies 11,000 miles and wrested the Champion Polo Cup from us, a very sporting and popular effort.

Endowed with the natural aptitude of a pioneer race, Australians have come to the fore in most branches of science and have distinguished themselves in exploration and invention. Nor do they neglect the Arts. There is a fine school of painting and they produce good musicians,

¹ The late Lord Forster; he played for Eton and was Captain of Oxford and Hampshire and played for the "Gentlemen".

especially singers. Nellie Melba was their immortal and even with the world at her feet she remained a good Australian, proud of her country and working continuously for the returned soldiers or to give budding musicians a hand.

The "Garden State" has been built up by solid colonists and was well administered, the community thrifty and stable. Whatever government might be in power, Liberal, Labour or Nationalist, they were able men who knew their work and who treated the King's Representatives with every possible courtesy. If a great deal of important constructive work did not fall to the Governor's share, who was I to complain or create it?

One project, however, which I had on my mind was to encourage the opening up of Central and Northern Australia by the building of a railway. With this object in view I made a six-weeks' trip accompanied by the Premier, Sir Henry Barwell, and the Commissioner of Railways. We drove from Oodnadatta, which was rail-head, to Alice Springs in the McDonnell Ranges, and a couple of hundred miles beyond, coming back by a different route to the west. We took three American cars (for various reasons the available British cars were unsuitable), and one spare tyre, and though we did some 4,000 miles scarcely touching a road we never had a puncture. We met batches of Aborigines who had never seen white men and to whom cars were devils. Three shy ladies we found one day hunting on their own, with dogs and spears, in the costume of Eve before she fell to the fig-leaf. One of these took a fancy to me and gave me a live lizard to eat, having first bitten off its head. They love their dogs and the women often suckle the puppies. It is a curious fact that the Australian "abo" unlike the primitive races

of other countries never discovered the bow and arrow but conducted his warfare and sport by means of the throwing spear and boomerang. He found that the insulators from the transcontinental telegraph line could be fashioned into excellent spear-heads. Stone-age in habits and appearance the "black fellow" is by no means the lowest type of humanity having often a better intellectual equipment than the negro. He is said to be of Caucasian origin. Though given large reservations these interesting folk are rapidly disappearing under the pressure of civilization.

Hot days and cold nights like the Punjab. We slept in the open, hole for the hip, head now to the Southern Cross, under several blankets and a kangaroo rug. The water-bags were sometimes frozen solid and one's boots liable to be stolen by dingoes (wild dogs). The "Bush," often hundreds of miles of prairie without cover, was so still that we divided into two camps, snorers and non-snorers. There had been no rain for three years. Water was scarce and we had to carry enough for the radiators. We found it sometimes by digging in the river-beds and sometimes in rock-holes to which the natives directed us. This scarcity of water is Australia's drawback. In the Northern Territory the rivers sometimes do not flow for years, but when they do they flood rather than drain the country. This fact and the existence of an extensive artesian basin leads one to suppose that in due course water conservancy will play its part in the development of the Northern Territory.

The "Dead Heart of Australia," that grave of so many explorers and of so many cherished schemes is a queer archaic place where you may pick up whalebones and other marine relics 1,000 miles from the sea. It gives

an uncanny impression of primeval antiquity. Its fickle rainfall and pests that afflict sheep and cattle make it difficult for regular settlement, but I feel no doubt that its day will come and that the north-south railway is a necessity for the continent. Gold is certainly there and maybe, let us hope, oil. In the clear atmosphere, so rarely disturbed, of the McDonnell Ranges, one would think an observatory would find a wonderful site. The few settlers we met were well contented and had still the pioneering spirit strong within them. Later my sister, Philippa, who was a pedestrian, walked north to Port Darwin, through the "Never-Never Land," accompanied only by a lubra (black girl) and boy and a baggage camel, and wrote an excellent travel book¹. The railway to Alice Springs, 1,000 miles north of Adelaide and the centre of the continent, is now an accomplished fact, and from Port Darwin on the north coast, it runs south for 350 miles. There is still a gap of some 450 miles to fill.

Twice I crossed to New Zealand, spending on the way some time in Sydney, where as Lord Rosebery wrote "Granite gates give reluctant entrance to a Paradise of Waters called after an obscure minister of the Crown." The surf-bathing on the famous beaches of Manly, Coogee and Bondi, where a million people will take the water during a week-end, is one of the sights of Sydney, and I have never met with any form of exercise which so quickly makes one fit. In contrast to the Australian, who is almost aggressively Australian, the New Zealander gave me the impression of being very British, though the demonstrations of loyalty and affection for the Throne and the Old Country in both these distant Dominions are equally striking. The Maoris, a fine and interesting

¹ *A Walkabout in Australia*, by Philippa Bridges.

people abound, but there seems to be no racial feeling and no colour problem, rather a spirit of democratic equality. The country is thoroughly well organized and marketing so efficient that the toothsome food products of New Zealand can be sold on their trade mark all over the world.

On each visit I divided my spare time equally between "big-game" fishing off the Bay of Islands and Cape Brett, and a beat on the Tongariro River, where the trout fishing was remarkable. Zane Grey with his yacht the *Fisherman* was at Russell and I caught my first Striped Marlin from one of his launches under the aegis of Captain Mitchell, who had been in charge of the Fire Brigade at Salonica during the Great Fire. Mitchell had just broken all records by landing a 975 pound Black Marlin.

The whole of New Zealand, coast and interior, is beautiful and very diverse. The importation of animals has given it a new character, for barring a couple of bats, New Zealand was once innocent of mammals. The Maoris brought their dogs and Captain Cook his pigs and the British their domestic animals, followed by game, all of which from moose down thrived exceedingly though sometimes upsetting the equilibrium of nature. The "Captain Cooks" now run wild. Fishing one day from the banks of lovely Lake Taupo, I was surprised by a big wild boar which charged out of the bush and seized a trout that was lying on the grass. The Maori with me pursued him with yells and stones but without avail. This man was typical of his race. He was physically very strong and sound, intelligent and gay and a good sportsman and threw a beautiful line. He owned land where he shot many red deer and told me that he often sent the heads to Scotland to be sold to tourists! The red deer with good feed and

shelter, in contrast to his Highland cousin, has waxed big and heavy and grows fine antlers. Similarly the rainbow trout in the Tongariro River will average over five pounds, while in the lakes they are much larger and the brown trout bigger still but of less sporting value.

At half-time we came home on leave. This was not, I think, *bien-vu* by the Dominions Office as South Australia had at that moment a Labour Government in power, whose policy included the substitution of locally raised Governors for the imported article. My able Lieutenant-Governor, Sir George Murray, elected to take a holiday at the same time and the senior justice was appointed to fill the rôle of Acting Lieutenant-Governor in our absence. When I returned to Adelaide six months later, the Government disclosed to me that they had entirely dropped the movement against the imported Governors. This was not, they said, due to my personal popularity but to the extreme difficulty which they experienced in getting their measures past the *locum tenens*. The conscientious and meticulous justice could not be hoodwinked. I was able to write this to Lord Stamfordham for the King's eye with some gratification.

The Labour Party in Australia possesses a strong flavour of the Roman Catholic. This is the religious aftermath of the Gold Boom and the considerable immigration of the Irish in the lean years of the last century. The Roman Catholic Church has a certain measure of control over Labour, though this was more marked in New South Wales and Victoria than in South Australia, where the Roman Catholic proportion was only about sixteen per cent and the bulk of the population Church of England and Nonconformist. The Archbishop, Mgr. Spence was a cultivated and charming Irishman, who had spent many

years in Italy but at the time of which I write Mgr. Mannix, Archbishop of Melbourne, was represented as the black sheep of the flock, and regarded by many as thoroughly disloyal. When I came to know him I must admit that I came to the conclusion that he had been misjudged and mishandled by some who should have better known their man, however much they disagreed with him. He had remarkable ability and strong character and an immense and enthusiastic following in his own Church. He was a personage to be reckoned with and would, I thought, prove a great citizen to Australia and in time an asset to the Empire. I, for one, would not have minded seeing a Red Hat descend upon his head. As an influence on Labour, Rome would seem vastly to be preferred to Moscow.

Adelaide was nicknamed "the City of Churches," and there were certainly plenty of them, but they were well-filled and administered for the most part by broad-minded men who whatever their beliefs did not fail to work together in time of need. St. Peter's Cathedral, the seat of the Church of England, is a fine building in a beautiful situation.

In 1927 the Federal Parliament in the new capital, Canberra, was opened by King George VI, then Duke of York, who, accompanied by the Duchess, came out for the ceremony. They honoured us by spending a week at Government House, Adelaide, before the ceremony, and in spite of the many calls on their time we were able to fit in a short visit for them to a typical country "station" in time of drought. The Duke and Duchess were particularly interested in Scouts and Guides, and Australia being essentially a country for youth these movements were making good progress. Especially I think the latter,

as my wife made it her special child and was deeply interested in the girls. She did indeed continue her work in the movement for many years after as Commissioner for Fulham. My daughter commanded her school (Woodlands) company and duly carried off the cup given by the Duchess of York for the best company in the State.

Writing to King George V an account of the opening ceremony at Canberra, I said, "The Duke of York spoke excellently. The matter of the speech was very fine and went straight to the hearts of several millions of people who were listening in. His Royal Highness has touched people profoundly by his youth, his simplicity and natural bearing, while the Duchess has had a tremendous ovation and leaves us with the responsibility of having a continent in love with her."

Shortly after this we said good-bye to our many kind friends, and returned to England. The South Australian Government paid me the compliment of inviting me to prolong my tenure of office or to be proposed for a second term, but I held that in all such appointments periodical new blood was desirable.

I had seen a good deal of Hughes, the Great War Prime Minister, a very gifted little Welshman who was said to have begun life as an itinerant umbrella-mender. It did him credit to have come as far. He had a keen sense of humour and I remember once at a small but important luncheon in London, apropos of nothing and under cover of his deafness (no one could be deafer when necessary) with a loud flat voice, he broke into the pompous conversation to announce that there were two things which had almost ruined his country: one was the Rabbits and the other the O.B.E.! He was succeeded by Stanley Bruce, whose quality is statesmanlike. Bruce began his career

at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, and rowed in the 'Varsity boat. He won the Military Cross in a British Regiment during the war. He held the office for six years, and has since performed high service for the Empire.

Governors come and go in the Dominions and Colonies, and one sometimes wonders how they are remembered. The good that men do dies with them, and I have found that it was generally by some "gaffe" they had committed that they were recalled to mind. Perhaps I am remembered for a speech I once made at a Licensed Victuallers' Dinner in praise of wine. This sounds appropriate enough but Prohibition was then looming as a political issue. After dining generously I gave rein to my imagination quoting Chesterton:

And Noah often said to his wife
As he sat down to dine,
I don't care where the water goes
If it doesn't get into the wine.

and telling some new and (I thought) funny prohibition stories from America. The Labour Premier congratulated me and the Attorney-General slapped me on the back, "You *were* in good form," they said. But next day they came round to Government House with long faces.

"I say," they said, "you shouldn't have said what you did last night, there's the devil of a row about it."

The newspapers did not like my speech and were almost rude about it. They said I had insulted a great sister democracy and added "When the wine is in the wit is out." There was even a half-hearted motion amongst the prohibitionists to ask for my recall, but the Government having had their say were quite firm on that point and so ended a "storm in a tankard."

There were bad times coming for Australia and the signs were already ominous. Indeed the next decade was one of great difficulty. But Australia tightened her belt and got down to it. Thanks to far-seeing and courageous legislation and the devaluation of the pound, but most of all to the fortitude and efficiency of the men and women on the land, in the face of great deprivation, the Commonwealth weathered the storm and the first state to record returning prosperity was South Australia.

To my mind the important problems of Australia are those of population and defence and they are closely allied. Not only is she menaced by the continually expanding East but there are land-hungry nations in Europe demanding a fresh partition of the world's surface. Both these dangers can be met by an adequate increase of population. Australia is unlikely to be attacked unless the Mother Country is busy elsewhere, but she must be prepared to be her own first line of defence and to hold out for a considerable time. She has a vast coast line to protect and the variety of her railway gauges will be a source of danger in an emergency. But the motto of the Returned Soldiers and Sailors League is "The Price of Liberty is Eternal Vigilance," and a country that can produce citizen-soldiers of the calibre of the late Sir John Monash who commanded the Australian Corps in France, and Sir Harry Chauvel who in Palestine led the greatest cavalry force of our time, can be relied upon to be on the alert. That Australia is alive to the dangers which threaten her may be assumed from the fact that the chief issue at the recent Federal Elections was not *if* she was to be defended, but *how*.

There is much to be done that does not come within the scope of these reflexions, but the master-key is

population. The Australians are a fine people with whom I have only one fault to find, there are not enough of them. And as large families are now no longer fashionable, their increase must be supplemented from other white races. The situation is the more urgent as in a few years' time with her falling birth-rate, Great Britain herself may not be in a position to supply these young settlers and it is essential that they should be young to ensure acclimatization. When I was in South Australia 1,500 boys and a number of girls were brought out under the Barwell Scheme as farm apprentices and domestic servants. Ninety per cent of these were reported to have been a success and most of the girls married young Australians. But the Labour Government, on coming into power, had other ideas and scrapped the scheme. It would seem that with returning prosperity, the time is ripe for some comprehensive and continuous migration movement that will ensure a steady flow of new young people to the new land for some years to come.

To acquire a first-hand knowledge of the outlying portions of the Empire would seem to be, for those in a position to do so, a duty of citizenship and the more people who can visit India and the self-governing Dominions the better for our mutual understanding. This becomes easier with every passing year for the British have the travel habit strongly developed and the world is shrinking and bringing us nearer to our kin beyond the seas. The Dominions offer the traveller a spectacle of vigorous races, great cities, prosperity and social progress combined with a freedom and wide independent outlook that will make him proud to belong to such a combination and glad to share its privileges.

Looking back over a life full of experience and adventure

spent in many lands, I feel bound to seek for some meaning in it. I have seen the old world and the old Empire come through some very tight places, and the events between 1899 and 1937 are likely to stagger the historians of the next century. Nor is the storm over, the barometer is low and there are breakers ahead. How are these new perils to be met?

Tradition, experience and instinct lead me to pin my faith on the British Empire. With the world in its present unseemly condition of disorder and danger no one can doubt its importance as a beacon of peace and a buttress of defence against the forces of disruption.

This stabilizing power would be immensely increased by the co-operation of the United States of America. My visits to Washington at a time when circumstances induced the display of genuine motives and emotions convinced me that the friendly adhesion of this great and powerful country, with which the Dominion of Canada shares the honour of some 4,000 miles of undefended frontier, is not only an indispensable factor to the keeping of the world's peace but is one upon which we may count in time of real need.

The secret of salvation lies in this co-operation of the English-speaking races and we might well say, "Come the three corners of the world in arms and we shall shock them;" for, thus united, we should be impregnable, and would no doubt attract other moderate-thinking countries to our side.

But the British Empire stands for more than mere strategic security. It has become the traditional home of moderate and liberal-minded peoples who seek control without persecution and are determined to enjoy liberty without licence. Grouped under one throne, far-off

communities have grown to nationhood and have in their various environments evolved a system of democratic government that meets their needs. They owe much no doubt to the protection of the Crown supported by a sometimes wise and not always consistent statesmanship. But most of all are they indebted to the genius for colonization and self-government that inspired their adventurous forefathers, those hardy pioneers who set their sails for far horizons, east, west and south, from these little islands, which so many of them still call Home.

One may well be proud of the self-governing Dominions and they have every reason to be proud of themselves, but this is no time to rest complacently on the glamour of past achievement and to be content to enjoy what our fathers have won. *We cannot stand still!* Democracy is being challenged in no uncertain way. Dictatorships have sprung up all around us ringing the tocsin, beating the drum and shouting from the rostrum, "I am the Leader! Shut your eyes and follow me!" The Democracies too have urgent need of Leadership for we are becoming involved in the struggle between Dogma and Reason and if Reason falls, Civilization will go into the pit with her. But this leadership is of a different kind. It is that of the Common Man who has learnt to think and who has developed in freedom the community spirit and civic virtues which guide him in his actions towards his fellow man and towards the State. It is the spirit for which the British are remarkable and which it behoves Governments to foster with care for in its toleration and charity is to be found the germ of World Peace.

In our domestic relations we strive for the raising of the material level of the people so that all may share in the well-being of the State.

In our attitude towards the outer world we stand re-armed yet unaggressive; ready if necessary to maintain principles yet anxious to rid the world of animosity and willing to promote harmony even, if need be, at the cost of sacrifice.

A few days after writing the above lines I took part in an episode which seemed to provide a fitting note on which to close my narrative. The young King of the Belgians during his State Visit to London graciously went to Colchester to inspect and be installed in his new regiment, the 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards. They made a brave show, young perhaps, but up to establishment in officers and men (unusual in our Army) and as smart and steady on parade as veterans. Standing before them with King Leopold my mind went back to the day when I accompanied his father on a similar occasion during the war. The regiment at war-strength, six hundred seasoned troopers, was a very different sight and King Albert regarded them with evident admiration. In his deliberate way he used these words:

"They are splendid men. They would never go back." Unconsciously he had voiced the regimental motto, "*Vestigia nulla retrorsum.*"

The young king and the young regiment are symbols of the new age. The World is for the Young: let them shape it as they will.

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